

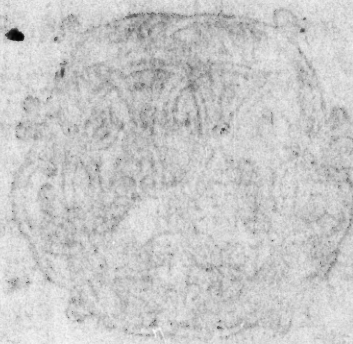
THE
WORKS,
IN
VERSE AND PROSE,
OF
WILLIAM SHENSTONE, Esq;
V O L. III.

CONTAINING
LETTERS to particular FRIENDS, from the
Year 1739 to 1763.

THE SECOND EDITION.



L O N D O N,
Printed for J. DODSLEY, in Pall-mall.
M D C C L X I X.



P R E F A C E.

THOUGH the Character of Mr. SHENSTONE is too well known, and his Reputation as a Writer too firmly established, to require any further commendation, yet it may perhaps be expected that some apology should be made for this Additional Volume of his Works, containing Familiar Letters to some of his most intimate Friends.

To those who may think such an apology requisite, it might be sufficient to say, that the reception which the former Volumes have met with, affords the strongest reason to believe that an addition to them would be very acceptable to the Public; and that the Author's talent in *epistolary* writing appears not to have been inferior to that which distinguishes his other compositions.

BUT it may be objected, that, whatever their merit may be, *Letters*, not intended for the Public, ought not to be published; and that an act of this kind is a violation of Private Friendship.

THIS objection, it must be confessed, carries with it such an air of delicacy, that the persons here concerned are very willing to give it all due attention. At the same time they cannot but observe, that it will not hold in all cases, and therefore must unavoidably be subject to some limitations—that these limitations must vary, as the circumstances of cases happen to vary—and that not to make proper allowances for such circumstances is highly unreasonable—injurious to many who have deserved well of the Public by this very conduct, and detrimental to the interests of Literature. It might perhaps be difficult, and is by no means necessary, to enumerate these several limitations. It will be sufficient in this place to say, that where neither the reputation

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tation of the Writer, nor that of any other person, is injured, there the force of the objection evidently ceases. And it is not only believed, on the most mature deliberation, that this is the case in the present instance; but moreover that there are positive good reasons in its favour, respecting as well the Writer's character in this *species* of composition, as the satisfaction and entertainment of the Reader.

THE encouragement which has been usually given to Works of this nature might seem to make these observations unnecessary ! But it was not thought sufficient barely to shelter this publication under the sanction of such an authority ; as it is well known that the wantonness of curiosity has sometimes encouraged designs by no means justifiable : and it is as readily acknowledged that the following Letters are deficient in many particulars requisite to excite that curiosity, being neither written on popular subjects, nor addressed to persons of rank

and eminence in the world. They will not fail however to afford an agreeable entertainment to such as can relish an animated display of the various efforts of a fine Imagination for a length of years, whether amusing itself with rural embellishments, or occupied in other pleasures of learned retirement, and a warm disinterested friendship. Such are the subjects of the following Letters! and if any person should still retain a doubt concerning the propriety of perpetuating them in this manner, he shall be finally referred to the Writer's own authority, who, in a letter dated October 23, 1754, thus expresses himself:

“ I CONFESS to you that I am considerably mortified by Mr. W—’s conduct in regard to those Letters (meaning his own letters to that gentleman’s brother); and, rather than they should have been so unnecessarily destroyed, would have given more money than it is allowable for me to mention with decency. I look upon
“ my

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“ my Letters as some of my *chef-d'œuvres*,
 “ and could I be supposed to have the smal-
 “ lest pretensions to propriety of style or sen-
 “ timent, I should imagine it must appear
 “ principally in my Letters to his brother,
 “ and one or two more friends. I consider
 “ them as the records of a friendship that
 “ will be always dear to me, and as the
 “ history of my mind for these twenty years
 “ past.”

WHEN it is considered how seldom so
 valuable a collection of real correspondence
 is to be met with, and how difficult it is to
 supply the want of it by a fictitious one, it
 cannot be doubted that the Public will be
 pleased to see the loss here complained of so
 well repaired, and to be furnished with such
 genuine examples of the Author's style and
 sentiments, together with an authentic history
 of his mind, for so long a space of time.

To conclude : The talents of this Au-
 thor, on whatever subject they were exercised,

were so uncommon, and the fame of his little *Ferme ornée*, under the conduct of a taste entirely original, was become so considerable, that every specimen of the one, and every anecdote relative to the improvement of the other, seemed too interesting to be buried in oblivion: at least, they were thought so by those to whom the *greater* part of this Collection is addressed:—persons indeed confessedly partial to the Writer's talents, and interested in his commendations; but at the same time persons neither so regardless of their Friend's reputation, nor their own, as to have hazarded either, without the strongest persuasion that their partiality had not imposed upon their judgement; and that it was no indecent ostentation in them, by this public act, to testify, that they esteemed it not only a peculiar felicity in their fortunes, but likewise some degree of credit, to have enjoyed the pleasures of such a Friendship throughout so considerable a period of human life.



MR.

I. To Mr. JAGO, with a Song, and the Author's Sentiments on Musical Composition.

Dear Sir,

1739-

AS my head is considerably more confused than usual, by reason of a bad cold, I shall aim no higher in this letter than at bare *recitative*, reserving all my *airs* for a season when my mind is more in *tune*. Such, I hope, will be the time which you set apart to attend the *chief musician*, at Birmingham. I thorough-

ly design to lend an *ear* to *his* performance, on condition he will not refuse one to a proposal I intend to make, of having, one day or other, a merry strain at The Leasowes. But if you have any *p penchant* to see the face of your humble servant at Birmingham, your most effectual way will be to inform him when these solemn nuptials betwixt Tweedle-dum and Tweedle-dee are to be consummated, I will, *certainly*, not be absent at the throwing of the stockings; any more than Parson Evans in Shakespear would be "absence at the grace." I have sent a song, not that I am sure I have not sent it before; but that, if you can see any joke that it containeth, the fore-mentioned gentleman may be asked to translate it into music. When I use this expression, you will, peradventure, look upon it as my opinion, that in musical compositions sound ought as much to answer sense as one language does another, insomuch, that such and such thoughts ought to bring into our heads such and such sounds, and *vice versa*. But in case there is no sense, and no thought, the more languages a sentence is translated into, the more 'tis exposed. And in case it be the misfortune of my little piece to have neither, I beg that Mr. Marriett may not inform anybody what it signifies in music. As a farther proof of the confused state of my intellects, you see, almost at the end of my letter, my thanks for the packet, &c. which ought to have been placed in the very front of it, in order to express, in some degree, the
sense



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sense I have of your favours. I long to see you; and
am, dear Sir,

Your most obedient

and faithful servant,

W. SHENSUON.

S O N G.

When bright Ophelia treads the green

"In all the pride of dress and mien;

"Averse to freedom, mirth, and play,

"The lofty rival of the day;

"Methinks to my enchanted eye,

"The lilies droop, the roses die.

"But when, disdaining art, the fair

"Assumes a soft, engaging air:

"Mild as the opening morn of May,

"And as the feather'd warblers gay:

"The scene improves where'er she goes,

"More sweetly smiles the pink and rose.

"O lovely maid! propitious hear,

"Nor think thy Damon insincere.

"Pity my wild delusive flame:

"For tho' the flowers are still the same,

"To me they languish, or improve,

"And plainly tell me that I love."

II. To the same, in the Manner of PAMELA.

1739

WELL! and so I sat me down in my room, and was reading *Pamela*—one might furnish this book with several pretty decorations, thought I to myself; and then I began to design cuts for it, in particular places. For instance, one, where Pamela is forced to fall upon her knees in the arbor: a second, where she is in bed, and Mrs. Jewkes holds one hand, and Mr. B. the other: a third, where Pamela sits sewing in the summer-house, &c. So I just sketched them out, and sent my little hints, such as they were, to Mr. R——n. As soon as I had sealed my letter, in comes Mrs. Arnold^a—“Well, Mrs. Arnold, says I, this Mr. Jago never comes—what can one do? I’m as dull as a beetle for want of company.” “Sir, says she, the hen—” “What makes you out of breath? says I, Mrs. Arnold; what’s the matter?” “Why, Sir, says she, the hen that I set last-sabbath-day-was-three-weeks has just hatched, and has brought all her eggs to good.” “That’s brave indeed, says I.” “Ay, that it is, says she, so be and’t please G—d an how that they liven, there’ll be a glorious parcel of ’em.

^a His house-keeper, of whom very respectful mention is made in the course of this correspondence.

“ Shall

"Shall I bring 'em up for you to see?" says she.
 "No, thank ye, Mrs. Arnold, says I; but aren't
 ye in some apprehensions from the kite, Mrs.
 Arnold?"—"No, Sir, says she, I hope there's no
 danger; I takes pretty good care of 'em."—"I
 don't question your care, says I; for you're seldom
 without a duck or a chicken about you."—"Poor
 pretty ~~creters~~ / says she; look here, Master, this has
 gotten a speck of black upon her tail."—"Ay,
 I thought you wern't without one about you, says
 I."—"I don't think, says I, Mrs. Arnold, but your
 soul was design'd for a hen, originally."—"Why
 and if I had beema hen, says she, I believe I should
 have done as much for my chickens as yonder
 great black-and-white hen does, tho' I say't, that
 should not say't, said she."—"Aye, that you would,
 thought I."—"Well, but now when Mr. Jago comes,
 have you got ter a chicken that's fit to bid?"
 "No, says she, I doubt there is ne'er-a-one."
 "Well, says I, Mrs. Arnold, you and your chicken
 may go down; I am going to write a letter." So
 I sat down, and wrote thus far: scrattle, scrattle,
 goes the pen—why how now? says I—what's the
 matter with the pen? So I thought I would make an
 end of my letter, because my pen went scrattle, scrat-
 tle. Well, I was tant, I shall have little pleasure
 when Mr. Jago comes; for I never fixed my heart
 much upon any thing in my life, but some misfor-
 tune happened to balance my pleasure.—After all,
 said

thought I, it must be some very ill accident that out-weighs the pleasure I shall take in seeing him.

Leicester, July 22.

W. SHENSTONE.

III. To a Friend, too ceremoniously declining to purchase a Horse for him.

SIR, 1739.

I CANNOT avoid imagining the first part of your letter was mere raillery. I am sure it gave me a good deal of pleasure (for I can bear very well to hear my foibles exposed, though not my faults), and on that account must needs make grateful mention of it. I acknowledge the oddness of the letter which occasioned it, and could not expect that such an ill-formed application could have produced an answer so very oratorical. In the first place, you lay open the subject, or indeed, what you call the offices in which I am pleased to employ you. In the next, you alledge your own inability to enter upon matters of such great concernment. That this is rhetorical, nay, pure rhetoric, I gather from the ornaments of all the declamations that I ever heard in my life. 'Tis, moreover, not uncommon with declaimers to give some reasons why they should not absolutely decline the subject, though they are sensible

sible of their insufficiency (otherwise they might be expected to sit down, and hold their tongues). And this is what you have done, by saying that you are unwilling to dissent from the world in regard to the subjects you are engaged in; that you, therefore, chose to steer a middle course, by that means avoiding the imputation of presumption on the one hand, and indifference on the other. When this is done, you enter gravely upon the subject, and, to give it a greater perspicuity, divide it into two parts. The first part happens to be "concerning the purchase of an horse." On this occasion, you inform me, that I am in a good country for horses; and secondly, that I have a number of acquaintance round about me, who are very well skilled in the nature of them. Now each of these informations seems, at first sight, to mean no more than what I have better opportunities of knowing than the person who informs me, and, on this account, to err in point of superfluity. But, upon second thoughts, they have *this force* (to speak like a grammarian); namely, that I am entirely negligent of my own affairs; and, secondly, that I care not whom I give trouble to, if I can but avoid it myself; so that the sentences have really a beauty, when one searches beneath their superficialities. After you have said this and more, which includes all that can be said upon the subject, you descend to the second division, in relation to which I am too grateful to be otherwise than *serious* in my acknowledgements.

I HAD not expatiated thus far, but to shew that I am not insensible of a sneer; nor should I expatiate any farther, but to prove that I am equally sensible of a favour.

I DESIRE you would believe, that I absolutely assent to your critique: That some of your sentiments were my own before I communicated the verses; and others, as soon as you had favoured me with the discovery of them: That I would, *per præsentes*, return my thanks for them; which you might justly have claimed, whether I had approved them or not. One exception to this approbation my modesty bids me mention, on account of your too great partiality in my favour. My gratitude you are entitled to without exception or limitation.

It will, perhaps, gratify your curiosity to know, that Mr. G. has a copy of verses in the last magazine, entitled, "The little Cur." There are several strokes that are picturesque and humorous; I believe it was done in haste. The motto is exquisite, and much more properly applied by Mr. G. than the Emperor Adrian, in my opinion, notwithstanding all that Pope says. Tell me your judgement of Mr. L——n's in the same paper. The epigram "To one who refused to walk in the Park, &c." is a good one.

I HAVE

I HAVE waved sending the verses to Mr. Somerville at present, because I hope to see you soon either at The Leasowes or at Birmingham. I cannot tell whether I shall have time to inclose in this letter my ballad. If I do, consider it only as some words that I chuse to make use of to some notes of which I am more than ordinarily fond. It is as much designed for my own singing (in private I mean) as ever was a bottle of cherry brandy for an old woman's drinking. Now I think of it, I really believe that I every day approach nearer and nearer to the capacity, the way, the insignificancy, of an old woman. Mrs. Arnold has certainly, by her *charms*, her incantations, and her conversations together, contributed a good deal to this transformation. Pray come over if you can, and try to reinstate me in my right mind, in proportion to the soundness of which I shall be more and more.

Your friend and servant,

W. S.

The tune "Come, and listen to my ditty, &c." The words founded upon a true history of Queen Elizabeth, who, looking from a castle wherein she was a prisoner, and seeing a country milk-maid singing, expressed great envy at the girl's condition, and dissatisfaction with regard to her own.

IV. To

IV. To the same, from Town.

Dear Sir,

I RETURN you my thanks, most heartily, for the poetical resentment which you have shewn against my censurers, the Riddle-masters. I have sent Mr. Somerville's verses and yours to Cave; though I am ashamed to own I neglected it so long, that, I fear, he will have no room for them this month. If you can extirpate false wit in a manner, you will do no small service to the true: you do no small *honour* to it, whether you extirpate the other or not.

You have heard of the motions have heard, probably, all that I can tell you of it: That it was ill-concerted; that it has done the opposition great disservice; that the King is now confirmed in the opinion of Sir Robert's honesty; that the younger Mr. Pitt's speech was the most admired on the opposite side; and Sir R—t's on the court side; that they did not leave the House till five in the morning; that Sir R—t and P—y are so violent, that the Sp— is continually calling them to order; finally, that the affair has occasioned this print, which I address to your curiosity merely, though the lines upon the Bishop are humourous enough.—Now I mention curiosity; do you take notice of the many quaint contrivances

trivances made use of to catch peoples natural inquisitiveness in the pamphlets, viz, "Are these things so?"—"Yes, they are."—"What then?"—"The devil of a story."—"Hoy, boys."—"Up go we."—And a thousand others.—What do you think must be my expence, who love to pry into every thing of this kind? Why, truly, one shilling. My company goes to George's Coffee-house, where, for that small subscription, I read all pamphlets under a three-shilling dimensions; and, indeed, any larger ones would not be fit for coffee-house perusal.—Lord Dudley lent me two sermons, given him at the House of Lords, which I read last night. In the first, there are a great many deep animadversions delivered in a style that is tolerable; in the other, there is as great a want of common English as there is plenty of common observations.—Have you seen the sermons on the Martyrdom and on the Fast-day? If you read either, send for the first.—You'll find me degenerate from a gentle bard into a snarling critic, if my poem does not please (you'll say I am no very candid one at present): but let its fate be what it will, I shall lay no small stress upon the opinion of some that have approved it. As it is at present in *keeping*, it discovers no uncommon impudence, and runs no very great risque; but who can answer for it, when it has the gracelessness to *come upon the town*?—*Ora pro nobis* must soon be my motto. Its virtues and faults will then be incapable of addition or diminution,

diminution, and the pious assistance of friends must—but I am no Roman Catholic.—The intrinsic merit of a book when it is printed, as well as the past life and conversation of a man that is departed, must damn, or give it immortality—I mean, to a certain degree. I scribble what comes uppermost, and desire you would do the same.—

Yours,

W. S.

V. To a Friend, from London, describing his Temper, and Manner of Living there.

From Mr. Wintle's, Per-
former, near Temple-
Bar, Dec. 6th Feb. 1746

Dear Sir,

I AM now with regard to the town pretty much in the same state in which I expect to be always with regard to the world; sometimes exclaiming and railing against it; sometimes giving it a good word, and even admiring it. A sun-shiny day, a tavern supper after a play well acted, and now and then an invigorating breath of air in the Mall, never fail of producing a chearful effect. I don't know whether I gave you any account of Quin's acting Falstaff in my former letter: I really imagined that I saw you tittering on one side me, shaking your sides, and sometimes scarce containing yourself. You will

pardon

pardon the attitude in which I placed you, since it was what seemed *natural* at that circumstance of time.

—Comus I have once been at, for the sake of the songs, though I detest it in any *light*: but as a *dramatic* piece, the *taking* of it seems a *prodigy*; yet indeed *such-a-one*, as was pretty tolerably accounted for by a gentleman who sat by me in the *boxes*. This learned sage, being asked how he liked the play, made answer, “He could not tell — pretty well, he thought” — or indeed as well as any other play — he always “took it, that people only came there to see and to be seen — for as for what was said, he owned, he never understood any thing of the matter.” I told him, I thought a great many of its admirers were in his case, if they would but own it.

On the other hand, it is amazing to consider to what an universality of learning people make pretensions here. There’s not a drawer, a chair or hackney coach-man, but is politician, poet, and judge of polite literature. Chimney-sweepers damn the Convention, and black-shoe-boys cry up the Genius of Shakespear. “The Danger of writing Verse” is a very good thing; if you have not read it, I would recommend it to you as poetical. But now I talk of Learning, I must not omit an interview which I accidentally had the other night in company with Lord D — and one Mr. C —. We were taken to sup at a private house, where I found a person whom I had never seen before. The man behaved exceeding modestly

modestly and well; till, growing a little merry over a bottle (and being a little countenanced by the subject we were upon), he pulls out of his pocket about half a dozen ballads, and distributes them amongst the company. I (not finding at first they were of his own composition) read one over, and, finding it a dull piece of stuff, contented myself with observing that it was exceedingly well *printed*. But to see the man's face on this occasion would make you pity the circumstance of an author as long as you live. His jollity ceased (as a flame would do, should you pour water upon it); and, I believe, for about five minutes, he spoke not a syllable. At length, recovering himself, he began to talk about his country-seat, about Houghton-Hall, and soon after desired a health, imagining (as I found afterwards) that Lord D— would have given Sir Robert's. But he did not, naming Sir T—L—: mine, which followed, was that of Mr. L—. Now, who do you think this should be, but honest Ralph Freeman (at least the writer of the paper so subscribed), your father's old friend and intimate, Sir Robert's right-hand, a person that lives elegantly, drives six of the best horses in town, and plays on St. John's organ: (you know Mr. L—is not only Sir Robert's greatest enemy, but the Gazetteer's proper antagonist.) We were invited to see him very civilly, and indeed the man behaved with the utmost good-humour, without arrogance, or any attempts at wit, which, probably, would not have

have been very successful.—Ask your father what he would say to me, if I should join in the cause with his old friends, and take a good annuity under Sir Robert, which, I believe, I might have; and little encouragement, God knows, have I met with on the other side of the question. I say, I believe I *might have*, because I know a certain person gives pensions of three pounds a-week to porters and the most illiterate stupid fellows you can imagine, to talk in his behalf at ale-houses: where they sit so long a time, and are as regularly relieved as one centry relieves another.—At least tell him that I expect in his answer to my letter (which I shall not allow him to assign to you), he write something to confirm me in my integrity, and to make me prefer him, and you, and honesty, to lace, brocade, and the smiles of the ladies,

“Et Veneri, & cunis, & plumis Sardanapali.”

But I hope to keep my Hercules in view, whether in print or manuscript; and though I am as fond of pleasure as most people, yet I shall observe the rule,

“Positam sic tangere noli.”

I DESIRE I may hear from you next post: I have a line or two, which I intend for the *sons of utter darkness* (as you call them) next magazine: I would send them to you, for your advice; but cannot readily find

find them. I like every thing in Mr. Somerville's, but the running of the last line. I think to insert them. Should be glad to have a line or two of yours, that one may make a bold attack. I look on it as *fun*, without the least emotion, I assure you.

I am, dear Sir,

Your faithful scribbling slave,

W. SHENSTONE.

VI. To the same at Bath, on his publishing his Poem of The Judgement of HERCULES.

My good friend!

From Mr. Wintle's,
April 30, 1740.

I HEARTILY thank you for the service your letter did me; and a considerable service, no doubt, it is, to raise the spirits of a person so habitually dispirited as I have been for some time. For this, and all former favours, as the fullen fellow says in Shakespear, "I thank you; I am not of many words, but I thank you."

I beg you would cease to apologize for your letters. In the first place, it will lay me under a necessity of doing so; and, in the next place, you may be assured,

fured, that no friendly letter of yours will ever be otherwise than infinitely agreeable to me.

I SENT a letter to Mr. Marriett at Bath, to be left with you at your former place of residence; you will be so kind as to give it to him.

IF I wish for a *large* fortune, it is rather for the sake of my friends than myself: or, to compromise the matter with those moralists who argue for the universality of *self-interest*, it is to gratify myself in the company, and in the gratifications, of my friends.

DR. Ratcliff has sent me a letter, which gives me much *satisfaction* in respect of my poem; notwithstanding, he cannot forbear adding, that he expects to hear, since my pen has so well adorned the fable, that my conduct will with equal propriety and elegance illustrate the moral. However, the simple approbation of a *sincere* man affects one more than Pliny's panegyric could do from a more courtly one.

THERE are several errors of the press, which neither sagacity nor vigilance itself, I now see, can prevent, and which I beg you to correct with your pen in a copy which I must get you to present to C—L— together with the inclosed letter. Please to be at the expence of having it stitched in purple paper, and gilt at the edges; and I will re-pay you.

I WAS loitering yesterday in the coffee-room, when two persons came in, well-dressed, and called for my poem; read a page or two, and commended the four lines upon Mr. L— extremely, ("Lov'd by that Prince, &c.") repeated them forty times, and in the end got them by heart, mentioned them to a third person, who said he knew of no virtue that the Prince was fired with, and then endeavoured to mimic the Prince's way of talking; but, says he, *I'll shew the four best lines in the poem*, and then proceeded to "Twas Youth's perplexing stage, &c." which are flat enough, God knows—but to my first heroes; one of them reads, "When great Alcides to a grove retir'd." *Ay, ay, you know Mr. L— did retire, he was in the secession; read on; you'll find he mentions Delia anon. Don't you remember Mr. L— wrote a song upon Delia? but proceed—you'll find he is going to give a description of two ladies, of different characters, that were in love with Mr. L—. One was* (here he named two names, which I have forgot.) *Upon my word, it is fine: I believe it is Pope's; but how comes Pope to praise himself there? ("Lov'd by that Bard, &c.") No doubt, however, it was written by Mr. Pope or Mr. D—.*

My critics proceeded to the reading of the last simile immediately, without the lines preceding it, and, agreeing that it was a very good thing, called out
for

for "The Oeconomy of Love." So you see, "*Laudant illas sed ipse legunt*," is the case. A person cannot be supposed vain from the approbation of such critics; or else I would not have inserted such a commendatory paragraph. I never enquire how my poem takes; and am afraid to do so. However, I find some do allow it to be *Mallet's*. I am impatient till I hear from you: I shall be here till this day fortnight; afterwards at The Leasowes—I must add this, "*Ne, audis nostris, perire*;" but at the same time also

— "O defend,
Against your judgement, your most faithful friend."

W. S.

THESE *opposite* petitions delineate my state of mind: it is well for me that I have you at Bath.

VII. To Mr. JAGO; on the Death of his Father.

Dear Mr. Jago, Leasowes, Aug. 28, 1740.

I FIND some difficulty in writing to you on this melancholy occasion. No one can be more unfit to attempt to lessen your grief than myself, because no one has a deeper sense of the *cause* of your affliction. Though I would by no means be number-

ed by you amongst the common herd of your acquaintance that tell you they are sorry, yet it were impertinent in me to mention a mere friend's concern to a person interested by so many more tender regards. Besides, I should be glad to alleviate your sorrow, and such sort of condolence tends but little to promote that end. I do not chuse to flatter you; neither could I, more especially at this time; but though I could perhaps find enough to say to persons of less sense than you, I know of nothing but what your own reason must have suggested. Concern indeed may have suspended the power of that faculty; and upon that pretence, I have a few things that I would suggest to you. After all, it is time alone that *can* and *will* cure *all* afflictions but such as are the consequence of vice; and yours, I am sure, proceeds from a *contrary* principle.

I HEARD accidentally of this sorrowful event, and accompanied you to London with the utmost concern. I wished it was in my power to mitigate your griefs by sharing them, as I have often found it in yours to augment my pleasures by so doing.

ALL that I can recommend to you is, not to confine your eye to any single event in life, but to take in your whole circumstances before you repine.

WHEN

When you reflect that you have lost one of the best of men in a father, you ought to comfort yourself that you had such a father; to whom I cannot forbear applying these lines from Milton:

“Since to part I
“Go, heav’nly guest, ethereal messenger!
“Sent by whose sovereign goodness we adore
“Gentle to me and affable has been
“Thy condescension, and shall be honour’d ever
“With grateful’st memory —”

End of Book VIII. PAR. Lost.

I would have you, by all means come over hither as soon as you can, I will endeavour to render the time you spend here as satisfactory as it is in my power; and I hope you will ever look upon me as your hearty friend, through all the vicissitudes of life.

PRAY give my humble service to Mrs. Jago and your brother.

I am, with the utmost affection,

Yours sincerely,

W. SHENSTONE.

VIII. To Mr. REYNOLDS.

Dear Sir,

Leaflowes, Aug. 1749.

WONDERFUL were the dangers and difficulties through which I went, the night I left you at Barels: which I looked upon as ordained by fate for the temporal punishment of obstinacy. It was very kind, and in character, for you to endeavour to deter me from the ways of darkness; but having a sort of *penchant* for needless difficulties, I have an undoubted right to indulge myself in them, so long as I do not insist upon any one's pity. It is true, these ought not to exceed a certain degree; they should be *lenia tormenta*; and I must own the labours I underwent that night did not come within the bounds which my imagination had prescribed. I cannot forbear mentioning one imminent danger. I rode along a considerable piece of water, covered so close with trees, that it was as probable I might have pursued the channel, which was dangerous, as my way out of it. Or, to put my case in a more poetical light, having by night intruded upon an amour betwixt a Wood-nymph and a River-god, I quod my escape to Fortune, who conveyed me from the vengeance which they might have taken. I put up finally at a little alehouse about ten o'clock, and lay all night awake, counting the cords which supported me, which I could more safely swear to than

to

to either bed or blanket. For farther particulars, see my epistle to the Pastor Fido of Lapworth.—Mr. Graves says, he should be glad to shew you any civilities in his power, upon his own acquaintance; and will serve you as far as his vote goes, upon my recommendation; but is afraid, without the concurrence of some more considerable friends, your chance will be but small *this* year, &c. If the former part of this news gives you any pleasure, I assure you it gives me no less to communicate it; and this pleasure proceeds from a principle which would induce me to serve you myself if it should ever be in my power.—I saw Mr. Lyttelton last week: he is a candidate for the county of Worcester, together with Lord Deerhurst; I hope Mr. Somerville will do him the honour to appear as his friend, which he must at least think second to that of succeeding.

I HEAR you are commenced Chaplain since I saw you. I wish you joy of it. The Chaplain's title is infinitely more agreeable than his office; and I hope the scarf, which is expressive of it, will be no diminutive thing, no four-penny-halfpenny piece of ribboning; but that it will

“High o’er the neck its rustling folds display,
“Disdain all usual bounds, extend its sway,
“Usurp the head, and push the wig away.”

I HOPE it will prove ominous, that my first letter is a congratulatory one; and if I were to have opportunities of sending all such, it would entirely quadrate with the sincere wishes of

Your faithful humble servant,

W. SHENSTONE.

I BEG my compliments to Mr. Somerville, Mrs. Knight, and your family.

IX. To the same,

From Mr. Wintle's, Perfumer, at the King's Arms, by Temple-Bar, Fleet-Street, 1740.

SIR,

I AM heartily obliged to Mr. Somerville, that he will make use of any means to serve me; more especially that he will take the trouble of consulting which may be most effectual to that end; and I desire you would represent these sentiments to him in the most expressive manner.

I HAVE, since I arrived here (which was last Saturday night), heard Lowe sing, and seen Cibber act. The laureat spoke an epilogue, made upon, and, I suppose,

suppose, by himself, in which he does not only make a bare confession, but an *ostentation* of all his follies :

“ Of *such* (says he) whoe’er demands a bill of fare
“ May look into my life — he’ll find ’em there ;”

or some such lines, I cannot accurately recollect them. I do not wonder he pleased extremely ; but to a considering man there is something strangely disagreeable, to hear a scandalous life recommended by one of his age, and as much satisfaction shewn in the review of it as if it had been a perfect galaxy of virtues. An Athenian audience would have shewn their different sentiments on this occasion. But I am acting the part of Jeremy Collier, and indeed in some degree of an hypocrite, for I confess I was highly pleased with him myself. I have nothing to add, but a fine close, if I had it ; as I have not, you must be content with the vulgar one, that I am

Yours sincerely,

W. SHENSTONE.

X. To the same.

Dear Sir,

1740.

I THANK you for the favour of your last letter, particularly your readiness in transmitting to me any thing of Mr. Somerville’s. It so fell out, that
Mr.

FRIGHTED at these threats, the gentleman retired; and in his way home had leisure to consider the joke that was put upon him, and more particularly turned upon the person to whom he was sent.

If you direct a line to Mr. Shuckburgh's, bookseller, in Fleet-street, it will arrive agreeable to

Your humble servant,

March, W. SHENSTONE.
Tuesday Night.

My compliments to your patron.

XI. To the same.

SIR, 1746.

YOUR last letter gave me a good deal of uneasiness in regard to Mr. Somerville's indisposition. I hope, if he is better, you will omit no opportunity of gratifying me with the news of it. I shall be glad to employ you and Mr. Jago in my little rivulet before winter comes, when one must bid adieu to rural beauties. Those charming scenes, which the poets, in order to render them more compleat, have furnished with ladies, must be stript of all their ornaments. Those incomparable nymphs, the Dryads and the Nereids, which have been my constant companions this short summer, will vanish to more pleasing

ing climes; and I must be left to seek my assistance in real beauties instead of imaginary ones. In short, I am thinking to live part of this winter in Worcester, or some other town. I was at a concert there, a very full one, lately. I observed Dr. Mackenzie talking to Mr. Lyttelton; and I hope, on that account, he is in his interest: otherwise Mr. Somerville would do Mr. Lyttelton great service by engaging him.—Mr. Lyttelton took occasion to mention to me the obligation he lay under to Mr. Somerville for his letter, as well as his other designs in his favour—that he had long received great pleasure from that gentleman's pen, and wished for the honour of his acquaintance. I told him, I believed the satisfaction would be mutual, or to that purpose. He added, that *The Chace* was an *extremely* beautiful poem, the best by far ever written on the subject. But now the fiddles squeaked, the harpsichord jingled, and the performers began to feel the divine enthusiasm. The god of music invaded them as he did the Sibyll of old:

“Deus, ecce Deus! cui talia facti

“Ante fores, subito non vultus, non color unus,

“Non comptæ mansere comæ; sed pectus, anhelum.

“Et rabie fera corda tument, majorque videri,

“Nec mortale sonans.”

I AM,

LETTER 3.M

I AM, Sir, with all due compliments, to Mr. Somerville,

Yours sincerely,

W. SHENSTONE

XII. To Mr. JAGO, from London, with Observations on the Stage, &c.

SIR,

Jan. 25, 1741.

YOU see I am extremely expeditious in answering your letter; the reason of which is a very powerful one, namely, the information which I received last night, that it would be agreeable to you I should do so. Please therefore to set aside the sum of eighteen pence, or thereabouts, for letters which you will receive whilst I am in London; and, to make it seem the less profusely squandered, consider it amongst any other casual expences which you carelessly submit to, merely to gratify your curiosity.

I WENT the other night, with the greatest expectations, to see "The Merry Wives of Windsor" performed at Covent-Garden. It is impossible to express how much every thing fell below my ideas. But I have considered since; and I find that my expectations were really more unjust than their manner of acting.

Persons,

M.R. SHENSTONE'S

Person, in order to act well, should have something of the author's fire, as well as a polite education. And what makes this the clearer to me is, that you hear ten plays well read by gentlemen in company, to one that you find well performed upon the stage.— Nothing can be more ignorant or affected than the scornful airs which some people give themselves at a country play; because, forsooth, they have seen plays in town. The truth is, the chief advantage of plays in town lies entirely in the scenery. You seldom observe a set of strollers without one or two actors who are quite equal to their parts; and I really know of no good one at either of the two Theatres Royal, except Cibber who rarely acts, and Mrs. Clive. I will add one more, in compliance with my own taste merely; and that is Mr. Neal, a fellow who, by playing the fool, has gained my particular esteem.

AFTER the play, we had an *entertainment*; falsely so called! It was that of Orpheus and Eurydice, the most *un-musical* thing I ever heard, and which lasted, I believe, three hours, with some intermixtures of Harlequin; both so dull, and yet heard with patience, that I was amazed, astonished, confounded: but really a man of *sense* ought not to be so; because they were not calculated for *him*.

I WANT you here extremely: pray come up for a week. I suppose you will not, so I will not argue superfluously.

LETTERS.

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superfluously. However, write soon; and believe that your letters are the most agreeable things in the world to, Sir,

Yours most faithfully,

W. S.

XIII. To the same.

Dear Sir,

1741.

AS I have no sort of library in town, I find several minutes upon my hands, for which, if I employ them in scribbling to my friends, they are but *slenderly obliged* to me. I hope no friend of mine will ever be induced, by my *example*, to do any thing but avoid it; I believe no one breathing can say with more truth, "*Video meliora, &c.*" It is not from a spirit of jealousy that I would advise my acquaintance to seek happiness in the regular path of a fixed life. But, though I very highly approve it, and envy it, my particular turn of mind would be as little satisfied with it as it is like to be in a *different* one. Yet, however I *complain*, I must own I have a good deal reconciled myself to this mixture of gratification and disappointment, which must be my lot till the last totally prevails.

YET,

YET, after all, to tell you the truth, I am not pleased with being advised to retire. I was saying the other day to Mr. Outing, that I *had* been ambitious more than I was at present, and that I grew less so every day. Upon this he chimed in with me, and approved my despondency; saying, "that *he* also had been ambitious, but found it would not do." Do you think I liked him much for this?—no—I wheeled about, and said, "I did not think with him; for I should always find myself whetted by disappointments, and more violent in proportion to the intricacy of the game." I spent a night with him and Mr. Meredith, and with him and Mr. Dean: in the latter party he had laid his hand upon his sword six times, and *threatened to put a dozen men to death*, one of which was Broughton the prize-fighter.—Mr. Whistler's company seldom *relieves* me on an evening; and I go to plays but *seldom*, because I intend no more to *give countenance* to the *pit*.—I have got a belt!!! which distinguishes me as much as a *garter*—it captivates the eyes of all beholders, and binds their understandings in golden bandage.—I heard a pedant punning upon the word *βίαιος*; and a wag whispering that I was related to *Beltisbanaxar*. In short I may say, from the Dragon of Wantley,

"No girdle, nor belt, e'er excell'd it;

"It frightens the men in a minute:

"No maiden yet ever beheld it,

"But wish'd herself tied to me in it."

THE

THE Dunciad is, doubtless, Mr. Pope's dotage, *τὸ Διὸς ἐνέπνοα*; flat in the whole, and including, with several tolerable lines, a number of weak, obscure, and even punning ones. What is now read by the *whole world*, and the *whole world's wife*, is, Mr. Harvey's Letter to Sir T. Hanmer. I own my *taste* is gratified in it, as well as that *unluckiness* natural to every one; though people say (I think idly) he is mad. For this *long* letter I shall expect *two*, soon after you have received it. Adieu!

DID you see a poem, called "Woman in Minia-
"ture," written with spirit, but incorrect? The people that were carrying Lord Orford in effigy, to behead him on Tower Hill, came into the box where he was, accidentally, at George's, to beg money of him, amongst others.

XIV. To Mr. —, on his taking Orders in the Church.

Dear Sir,

Leasowes, June 8, 1741.

I WRITE to you out of the abundant inclination I have to hear from you; imagining that, as you gave me a direction, you might possibly expect to receive a previous letter from me. I want to be informed of the impressions you receive from your *new*

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D

circumstances.

circumstances. The chief aversion which some people have to orders is, what I fancy you will remove in such as you converse with. I take it to be owing partly to dress, and partly to the *avowed profession* of religion. A young clergyman, that has distinguished his genius by a composition or two of a polite nature, and is capable of dressing *himself*, and his *religion*, in a different manner from the generality of his profession, that is, without formality, is certainly a genteel character. I speak this not with any fly design to advise, but to intimate that I think you very capable of *shining* in a dark-coloured coat.—You must consider me yet as a man of the world, and endeavouring to elicit that pleasure from gaiety which my reason tells me I shall never find.—It is impossible to express how stupid I have been ever since I came home, inasmuch that I cannot write a common letter without six repetitions. This is the third time I have begun yours, and you see what stuff it is made up of. I must e'en hasten to matter of fact, which is the comfortable resource of dull people, though, even as to that, I have nothing to *communicate*. But I would be glad to know, whether you are under a necessity of residing on week-days; and, if not, why I may not expect you a day or two at The Leasowes very soon.—Did you make any enquiry concerning the number of my poems sold at Oxford? or did you hear any thing concerning it that concerns me to hear?—Will S—— (for that is his true name) is the excess of simplicity and

and good-nature. He seems to have all the industry imaginable to divert and amuse people, without any ambitious ends to serve, or almost any concern whether he has so much as a laugh allowed to his stories, any farther than as a laugh is an indication that people are delighted. This, joined with his turn of thought, renders him quite agreeable. I wish it were in my power to conciliate acquaintance with half his ease.—Pray do not delay writing to me. Adieu!

W. SHENSTONE.

XV. To Mr. GRAVES, on similar Taste and Manners.

Dear Sir,

The Leaflowes, Sept. 23, 1741.

I WAS very agreeably entertained by your last letter, as indeed I am by every one of yours. It were affectation to except a paragraph or two on account of partiality, where, to say the truth, the partiality itself pleases one. This I am very positive of, that to have a friend of your temper and taste will always give me pleasure, whether I please the world or no; but to please ever so much, without some such friendship, would in all probability signify but little. I shall, therefore, value any means that tend to confirm my opinion of your esteem for me, preferably to any that shew me I am merely de-

D 2

serving

serving of it. After all, though a very limited number of *friends* may be sufficient, an idle person should have a large *acquaintance*; and I believe I have the least of any one that ever rambled about so much as I have done. I do not know how it is, but I absolutely despair of ever being introduced into the world. It may be objected by some (but you will not object it), that I may be acquainted with a sufficient number of people that are my *equals*, if I *will*. They may be my *equals* and *superiors* whom they mean, for aught I care; but their conversation gives me no more pleasure than the *canking* of a goose, or the quacking of a duck, in affluent circumstances: rather *less* indeed of the two, because the idea of the fat goose flatters one's appetite; but the *human goose* is neither fit to be heard nor eaten. I wish indeed to be *shown* into good company; but, if I can at all distinguish the nature of my inclinations, it is more in hopes of meeting with a refined conversation, than any thing else. I do not at all insist that my genius is *better* than that of my vociferous neighbours; if it is *different*, it is a sufficient reason why I should seek such companions as suit it; and whether they are found in high or low life, is little to the purpose. But you will perhaps discern the operations of *vanity* in all my endeavours; I will not disagree with you, provided you will allow *amusement* an equal share in them. It is the vanity to be intimate with men of distinguished sense, not of distinguished fortune.

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tune. And this is a vanity which you should not disapprove, because it will bind me a lasting friend to you and your family.

I HAVE been over at Shiffnall, and, in order to make myself agreeable, rode a-hunting with Mr. Pitt. I confess I was somewhat diverted; and my horse was so much an enthusiast, as to be very near running headlong into a deep water. I believe, if I were to turn sportsman, I should soon break my neck for fear the huntsman should despise me.

I WILL certainly endeavour to see you at Birmingham; but beg you would write me a long letter in the mean time: and contrive, if you can, to make it look like a packet as your last did, for the sight thereof is exceedingly comfortable.

THOUGH my wishes will not suffer me to believe that your eyes are in the danger you represent; yet, supposing them to be only very weak, I would recommend some musical instrument that is most agreeable to you. I have often looked upon music as my dernier resort, if I should ever discard the world, and turn eremite entirely. Consider what other amusement can make an equal impression in old age.

I HAVE filled my paper, not without difficulty, through the barrenness of my brain and situation:

D 3

my

my heart ever flows with the most warm streams of gratitude and affection for you. Adieu!

W. S.

XVI. To a Friend, expressing his Dissatisfaction at the Manner of Life in which he is engaged.

Dear Sir,

I WONDER I have not heard from you lately—of you indeed I have, from Mr. W—. If you could come over, probably, I might go back with you for a day or two; for my horse, I think, gets rather better, and may, with indulgence, perform such a journey. I want to advise with you about several matters:—to have your opinion about a *building* that I *have built*, and about a journey which I design to Bath; and about numberless things, which, as they are numberless, cannot be comprehended in this paper. I am

Your most affectionate friend,

W. SHENSTONE.

Now I am come home from a visit—every little uneasiness is sufficient to introduce my whole train of melancholy considerations, and to make me utterly dissatisfied with the life I now lead, and the life which

I foresee

I foresee I shall lead. I am angry, and envious, and dejected, and frantic, and disregard all present things, just as becomes a madman to do. I am infinitely pleased (though it is a gloomy joy) with the application of Dr. Swift's complaint, "that he is forced to die in a rage, like a poisoned rat in a hole." My soul is no more suited to the figure I make, than a cable rope to a cambric needle:—I cannot bear to see the advantages alienated, which I think I could deserve and relish so much more than those that have them.—Nothing can give me patience but the soothing sympathy of a friend, and *that* will only turn my rage into simple melancholy.—I believe soon I shall bear to see nobody. I *do* hate all hereabouts already, except one or two. I will have my *dinner* brought upon my table in my absence, and the plates fetched away in my absence; and nobody shall see me: for I can never bear to appear in the same stupid mediocrity for years together, and gain no ground. As Mr. G— complained to me (and, I think, you too, both unjustly), "I am no character."—I have in my temper some rakishness, but it is checked by want of spirits; some solidity, but it is softened by vanity; some esteem of learning, but it is broke in upon by laziness, imagination, and want of memory, &c.—I could reckon up twenty things throughout my whole circumstances wherein I am thus tantalized. Your fancy will present them.—Not that all I say here will signify to *you*: I am only under a fit of dissatisfaction, and to grum-

ble does me good—only excuse me, that I cure myself at your expence. Adieu!

XVII. To the same.

Dear Sir,

1741.

YOU must give me leave to complain of your last letter, three parts of which is filled with mere apology: I thought we had some time agreed, for our mutual emolument, to lay aside ceremonies of this species, till I was made Poet-laureat, and you Bishop of Winchester.—Why Bishop of Winchester, for God's sake? Why—because—he is Prelate of the Garter—an order, in all kinds of ceremony so greatly abounding.—Here am I still, trifling away my time, my money, and, I think, my health, which I fancy greatly inferior to what it would be in the country. Truth is, I do make shift to vary my days a little here; and, calling to mind the many irksome hours, the stupid identity, of which I have been so often sick in the country, I conclude that I am less *unhappy* than I shall find myself at home.—However, next month I hope to see The Leafowes with an appetite.—Walks in the Park are now delightfully pleasant: the company stays in the Mall till ten every night.—Mrs. Clive, Mrs. Woffington, Barbarini, and Mr. Garrick (happy man!) are gone over to Ireland, to act there for two months.

—Mr.

—Mr. Outing, the last time I saw him, told me how Dr. Mackenzie cured him of ever fighting with scrubs, &c. “I was just going, says he, to kick a fellow down stairs, when the Doctor cries out, ‘Mr. Outing! hear our Scotch proverb before you proceed any farther;—He that wrestles with a t—d, whether he get or lose the victory, is sure to be b—f—t.’ I had great difficulty (continued he) to contain myself till he had finished his story, but I found it so pat that it saved the fellow’s neck.” I wish I could cure him as easily of these Quixotical narrations.—I know no soul in town that *has* any taste, which occasions me the spleen frequently. I remember W— and I were observing, that no creatures, though ever so loathsome (as toads, serpents, adders, &c.), would be half so hated as ourselves, if we were to give vent to our spleen, and censure affections so bluntly as some people do. I would not venture this hint, if I did not believe you experience the same. For my part, people contradict me in things I have studied, and am certain of; and I keep silence even from good words (*bons mots*), though it is pain and grief to me. I must give up my knowledge to pretence, or vent it with diffidence to fools; or there is no peace. *These, these* are justifiable motives to wish for some degree of fame; that blind people may not bully a man that has his eyesight into their opinion that green is red, &c. Deference from fools is no invidious ambition: I dare own to you that I *have* this; and I will contend

tend, that I have no more *haughty* one.—This subject I could expatiate upon with pleasure; but I stop: a tasteless fellow has spoiled my Mall-walk to-night, and occasioned you some trouble in these dull observations.—I am

Yours affectionately,

W. SHENSTONE.

XVIII. To Mr. —, from The Leafowes.

Dear Sir, The Leafowes, June 17, 1741.

IF a friend of yours who lived in the farthest part of China were to send you a pinch of snuff wrapt up in a sheet of writing-paper, I conceive the snuff would improve in value as it traveled, and gratify your curiosity extremely by the time it reached your fingers ends.—Very true—you will say:—why then, *that very consideration* was my inducement to write to you at this time; and that sort of professional value is what you are to place upon my letter. For, be assured, I am not ignorant how much this my letter doth resemble a pinch of snuff in point of signifi-
cancy, and that both the one and the other are what you may as well do without.—My letter is as follows.

You

You must know, in rainy weather, I always soothe my melancholy with the remembrance of *distant* friends only; you cannot easily conceive the high value I place upon their good qualities at such a time; so that at this very instant I am *impatient* to see you. To-morrow, if the sun shines bright, I shall only *wish* for your company as for a *very great good*. If you are unemployed when you leave Bath, I should think, you might stay some time with me this summer. Refined sense is what one is apt to value one's self upon; but really, unless one has a refined soul or two to converse with, it is an inconvenience. I have ruined my happiness by conversing with you and a few more friends: as Falstaff says to Hal, "Company, *witty* company, has been the ruin of me!" Before I knew that pleasure, I was as contented as could be in my solitude; and *now*, the *absence* of *entertainment* is a *positive* pain to me. London has amused me a while with diversions; but now they are past, and I have neither any one about me that *has* the least *delicatsse*, or that I can inspire with the *ambition of having any*.—W—W—comes in a dirty *shirt*, and an old coat, without a stock, to pay me a visit. He pulled out a pair of scissars, and, giving them an intricate turn over his two thumbs, said, that *he* could do that, and I could make a poem; some for *one* thing, some for another:

"Hic nigri succus loliginis, hæc est
"Ærugo mera."

It

It was *splenic* weather too.—The man is curst who writes verses, and lives in the country.—If his *celestial* part inspires him to converse with Juno, his *terrestrial* one necessitates him to stoop to his landlady: so that he is in as disagreeable a situation, as if one person were to pull him upwards by the *head*, and another downwards by the *tail*.—Do you never find any thing of this?—I mean, that your *pride* and your *social* qualities torture you with their *different* attractions? Indeed one would always give way to the last, but that few are familiarity-proof, few but whom it teaches to despise one. Albeit I am conscious of the bad influence of freedom myself; yet, whilst it tends to discover wit, humour, and sense, it only renders me more and more

Your most obedient friend and servant,

W. SHENSTONE.

XIX. To the same, with an Invitation to accompany him to Town.

Dear Sir,

The Leasowes, Nov. 25, 1741.

THE reason why I write to you so suddenly is, that I have a proposal to make to you. If you could contrive to be in London for about a month from the end

end of December, I imagine you would spend it agreeably enough along with me, Mr. Outing, and Mr. Whistler. According to my calculations, we should be a very happy party at a play, coffee-house, or tavern. Do not let your supercilious friends come in upon you with their prudential maxims. Consider, you are now of the proper age for pleasure, and have not above four or five whimsical years left. You have not struck one bold stroke yet, that I know of. Saddle your mule, and let us be jogging to the great city. I will be answerable for amusement.—Let me have the pleasure of seeing you in the pit, in a laughter as cordial and singular as your friendship. Come—let us go forth into the opera-house; let us hear how the eunuch-folk sing. Turn your eye upon the lilies and roses, diamonds and rubies; the Belindas and the Sylvias of gay life! Think upon Mrs. Clive's inexpressible comicalness; not to mention Hippesley's joke-abounding physiognomy! Think, I say, *now*; for the time cometh when you shall say, "I have no pleasure in them."

I AM conscious of much merit in bringing about the interview betwixt Mr. L—— and Mr. S——; but merit, as Sir John Falstaff says, is not regarded in these coster-monger days.

PRAY now do not write me word that your *business* will not allow you *ten minutes* in a fortnight to write to me;

me; an excuse fit for none but a cobbler, who has ten children dependent upon a waxen thread. Adieu!

W. S.

XX. To the same, on occasion of printing *The School-mistress*.

Dear Sir,

1741.

I TRUST you do not pay double postage for my levity in inclosing these decorations. If I find you do, I will not send you the *thatch'd-house* and the birch-tree, with the sun setting, and gilding the scene.—I expect a cargo of franks; and then for the beautiful picture of Lady Gainsborough, and the deformed portrait of my old school-dame Sarah Lloyd! whose house is to be seen as thou travelest towards the native home of thy faithful servant—but she sleeps with her fathers, and is buried with her fathers—and Thomas her son *reigneth* in her stead!—I have the first sheet to correct upon the table. I have laid aside the thoughts of fame a good deal in this *un-promising* scheme; and fix them upon the landskip which is engraving, the red letter which I purpose, and the fruit-piece which you see, being the most seemly ornaments of the first sixpenny pamphlet that was ever so highly honoured. I shall incur the same reflection

fection with Ogilby, of having nothing good but my decorations.

I HAVE been walking in the Mall to-night.—The Duke was there, and was highly delighted with two dogs; and stared at me more enormously than ever Duke did before. I do not know for what reason; unless for the same which made him admire the other puppy-dogs, because they were large ones.

I EXPECT that in your neighbourhood, and in Warwickshire, there should be about twenty of my poems sold. I print it myself. I am not yet satisfied about mottoes. That printed is this, “O, quā sol habitabiles illustrat oras, maxime principum!” It must be short, on account of the plate. I do not know but I may adhere to a very insignificant one:

“En erit ergo
“Ille dies, mihi cum liceat tua dicere facta!”

I AM pleased with Mynde's engravings; and I can speak without affectation, that same is not *equally* in my thoughts.—One caution I gave Mr. G—, and it is what I would give to all my friends with whom I wish my intimacy may continue so much as I wish it may with you. Though I could bear the *disregard* of the town, I could not bear to see my friends alter their opinion which they say they have of what I write,

write, though millions contradict them. It is an obstinacy which *I* can boast of, and they that have more sense may surely insist on the liberty of judging for themselves. If *you* should falter, I should say you did not deserve your *capacity* to judge for yourself. Write soon—you never are at a fault—"tantummodo in-
"cepto opus est, cætera res expedit." Adieu!

W. S.

XXII. To the same, from Town, on the Death of
Mr. Somerville, &c.

My good friend,

1741.

OUR old friend Somerville is dead! I did not imagine I could have been so sorry as I find myself on this occasion—"Sublatum quærimus." I can now excuse all his foibles; impute them to age, and to distress of circumstances: the last of these considerations wrings my very soul to think on. For a man of high spirit, conscious of having (at least in one production) generally pleased the world, to be plagued and threatened by wretches that are low in every sense; to be forced to drink himself into pains of the body in order to get rid of the pains of the mind; is a misery which I can well conceive, because I may, without vanity, esteem myself his equal in point of oe-
conomy,

conomy, and consequently *ought* to have an eye on his misfortunes: (As you kindly hinted to me about twelve o'clock at the Feathers) I should retrench;—I will; but you shall not see me:—I will not let you know that I took your hint in good part. I will do it at solitary times, as I may: and yet there will be some difficulty in it; for whatever the *world* might esteem in poor Somerville, I really find, upon critical enquiry, that I loved him for nothing so much as his floccinauci-nihili-pili-fication of money.

Mr. A— was honourably acquitted: Lord A—, who was present, and behaved very insolently they say, was hissed out of court. They proved his application to the carpenter's son, to get him to swear against Mr. A—, though the boy was proved to have said in several companies (*before* he had been kept at Lord A—'s house) that he was sure the thing was accidental. Finally, it is believed he will recover the title of A—ea.

THE apprehension of the whores, and the suffocation of four in the round-house by the *stupidity* of the keeper, engrosses the talk of the town. The said house is re-building every day (for the mob on Sunday night demolished it), and re-demolished every night. The Duke of M—gh, J— S— his brother, Lord C— G—, were taken into the round-house, and confined from eleven at night till eleven next day: I am

not positive of the Duke of M—gh; the others are certain: and that a large number of people of the first fashion went from the round-house to De Veil's, to give in informations of their usage. The justice himself seems greatly scared; the prosecution will be carried on with violence, so as probably to hang the keeper, and there is an end.

LORD Bath's coachman got drunk and tumbled from his box, and he was forced to borrow Lord Orford's. Wits say, that it was but gratitude for my Lord Orford's *coachman* to drive my Lord Bath, as my Lord Bath *himself* had driven my Lord Orford. Thus they.

I HAVE ten million things to tell you; though they all amount to no more than that I wish to please you, and that I am

Your sincere friend—

—and humble servant.

I AM pleased that I can say I knew Mr. Somerville, which I am to thank you for.

XXII. To Mr. GRAVES, on Benevolence and Friendship.

The Leasowes,

Dear Mr. Graves,

Jan. 19, 1741-2.

I CANNOT forbear immediately writing to you: the pleasure you last letter gave me put it out of my power to restrain the overflowings of my benevolence. I can easily conceive that, upon some extraordinary instances of friendship, my heart might be *si fort attendi*, that I could not bear any restraint upon my ability to shew my gratitude. It is an observation I made upon reading to-day's paper, which contains an account of C. Rhevenhuller's success in favour of the Queen of Hungary. To think what sublime affection must influence that poor unfortunate Queen, should a faithful and zealous General revenge her upon her enemies, and restore her ruined affairs!

HAD a person shewn an esteem and affection for me, joined with any elegance, or without any elegance, in the expression of it; I should have been in acute pain till I had given some sign of my willingness to serve him.—From *all* this, I conclude that I have more humanity than some others.

PROBABLY enough I shall never meet with a larger share of happiness than I feel at present. If not, I

am thoroughly convinced, my pain is greatly superior to my pleasure. That pleasure is not absolutely dependent on the mind, I know from this, that I have enjoyed happier scenes in the company of some friends than I can possibly at present;—but alas! all the time you and I shall enjoy together, abstracted from the rest of our lives, and lumped, will not perhaps amount to a solid year and a half. How small a proportion!

Properly will say to one that talks thus, “Would you die?” To set the case upon a right footing, they must take away the hopes of greater happiness in *this* life; the fears of greater misery hereafter, together with the bodily pain of dying, and address me in a disposition betwixt mirth and melancholy; and I could easily resolve them.

I do not know how I am launched out so far into this complaint: it is, perhaps, a strain of constitutional whining; the effect of the wind—did it come from the winds? to the winds will I deliver it:

“Tradam protervis in mare Creticum,

“Portare ventis—”

I WILL be as happy as my fortune will permit, and make others so:

“Pone me pigris ubi nulla campis

“Arbor æstiva recreatur aura—”

I WILL

I will be so.—The joke is, that the description which you gave of that country was, that you had few trees about you; so that I should *trick* Fortune if she should grant my petition implicitly. But, in earnest, I intend to come and stay a day or two with you next summer.

Mr. Whistler is at Mr. Gosling's, bookseller, at the Mitre and Crown, in Fleet-street, and enquired much after you in his last letter to me. He writes to me; but I believe his affection for one weighs less with him while the town is in the other scale; though he is very obliging. I do not know whether I do right, when I say I believe we three, that is, in solitary circumstances, have an equal idea of, and affection for, each other. I say, supposing each to be alone, or in the country, which is nearly the same; for scenes alter minds as much as the air influences bodies. For instance, when Mr. Whistler is in town, I suppose we love him better than he does us; and when we are in town, I suppose the same may be said in regard to him.

THE true burlesque of Spenser (whose characteristic is simplicity) seems to consist in a *simple* representation of such things as one laughs to *see* or to *observe* one's self, rather than in any *monstrous* contrast betwixt the thoughts and words. I cannot help think-

ing that my added stanzas have more of his manner than what you saw before, which you are not a judge of till you have read him.

XXIII. To the same, with some Observations on SPENSER.

Dear Sir,

The Leasowes, 1742.

the Day before Christmas.

THOUGH your last letter seemed to put my correspondence upon an ostentatious footing, namely, an inclination to be witty, yet I assure you it was not any punctilious consideration of that kind that has kept me so long silent. Indeed with some people one would stand upon the nicest punctilios; for though ceremony be altogether lighter than vanity itself, yet it surely weighs as much as the acquaintance of the undeserving. But this is trifling, because it can have no reference to a person for whom I have the greatest affection.

IN regard to my Oxford affairs, you did all I could expect. I have wrote since to Mr. M—, who, either for your sake or mine, will, I dare say, settle them to my satisfaction.

I WISH

I wish your journey and head-ach would have permitted you to have been a little more particular concerning the seat of the Muses; but I suppose nothing material distinguished your fortnight.

Mr. Whistler has relapsed at Whitchurch; but purposed, when I last heard from him, to go to London before this time. I do not entirely understand his schemes, but should have been sincerely glad of his company with me this winter; and he says, he is not fond of London.—For my part, I designed to go thither the next month, but the fever (which is chiefly violent in towns) discourages me.

SOME time ago, I read Spenser's *Fairy Queen*; and, when I had finished, thought it a proper time to make some additions and corrections in my trifling imitation of him, *The School-mistress*.—His subject is certainly bad, and his action inexpressibly confused; but there are some particulars in him that charm one. Those which afford the greatest scope for a ludicrous imitation are, his simplicity and obsolete phrase; and yet these are what give one a very singular pleasure in the perusal. The burlesque which they occasion is of quite a different kind to that of Philips's *Shilling*, Cotton's *Travestie*, Hudibras, or Swift's works; but I need not tell you this. I inclose a copy, for your amusement and opinion;

which, if franks are plentiful, you may return, and save me the tedious trouble of writing it over again. The other paper was, *bona fide*, written to divert my thoughts from pain, for the same reason that I smoked; actions equally reputable.

Mr. Somerville's poem upon hawking, called, "Field Sports," I suppose, is out by this time. It was sent to Mr. Lyttelton, to be read to the Prince, to whom it was inscribed. It seems, he is fond of hawking.

I HAVE often thought those to be the most enviable people whom one least envies—I believe, married men are the happiest that are; but I cannot say I envy them, because they lose all their merit in the eyes of other ladies.

I am sincerely that you would write in a week's time at furthest, that I may receive your letter *here* if I should go from home this winter. I will never use any thing by way of conclusion, but your old Roman

Farewell!

W. SHENSTONE.

XXIV. To the same, with a Continuation of the same Subject.

Dear Mr. Graves!

June, 1742.

I AM glad the stay you make in Herefordshire amuses you, even though it puts you upon preferring the place you reside at to my own place of residence. I do not know whether it be from the prejudice of being born at The Leasowes, or from any real beauty in the situation; but I would wish no other, would some one, by an addition of two hundred pounds a year, put it in my power to exhibit my own designs. It is what I can now do in no other method than on paper. I live in such an un-economical manner, that I must not indulge myself in the plantation of a tree for the future. I have glutted myself with the extremity of solitude, and must adapt my expences more to sociable life. It is on this account that it seems more prudent for me to buy a chair while I am in town, than to carry down twelve guineas for the model of the tomb of Virgil, an urn, and a scheme or two more of like nature.—I long to have my picture, *distantly* approaching to a profile (the best manner I can think of to express myself), drawn by Davison. I have seen your sister's, and think the *face* well done in every respect; but am greatly indignant with other things of a less fixed nature. The cap, though a good cap enough,

enough, has a vile effect; the formality of stays, &c. not agreeable.—I do not know if you saw the picture of a Scotch girl there at full length? Miss Graves has the advantage of her's, or any picture there, in her person; but certainly this girl's hair is inexpressibly charming! there is the gentlest negligence in it I ever saw in any picture.—what follows, but that I wish your sister would give orders to pull off her cap, and have hair after the manner of this picture?—To speak abruptly; as it is, I disapprove it: were it altered, I should like it beyond any I ever saw.—I am glad you are reading Spenser: though his plan is detestable, and his invention less wonderful than most people imagine, who do not much consider the obviousness of allegory; yet, I think, a person of your disposition must take great delight in his *simplicity*, his good-nature, &c. Did you observe a stanza that begins a canto somewhere?

“Nought is there under heav'n's wide hollowness
 “That breeds,” &c.?”

WHEN I bought him first, I read a page or two of the Fairy Queen, and cared not to proceed. After that, Pope's Alley made me consider him ludicrously; and in that light, I think, one may read him with pleasure. I am now (as Ch—mley with —), from trifling and laughing at him, really in love with him. I think even the metre pretty (though

I shall

I shall never use it in earnest); and that the last Alexandrine has an extreme majesty. — Does not this line strike you? (I do not justly remember what canto it is in)

“Brave thoughts and noble deeds did evermore inspire.”

Perhaps it is my fancy only that is enchanted with the running of it. Adieu!

W. S.

XXV. To the same, on the Publication of The School-mistress.

Dear Mr. Graves!

I DEPENDED a good deal on an immediate answer from you, and am greatly fearful you never received a packet of little things which I sent you to Oxford, inclosed in a frank; though, if it arrived at all, it must have arrived several days before you left it. I beseech you to send me a line upon the receipt of these, which will free me from much perplexity; though it is doubtful whether I can defer my schemes so as to make your criticisms of service. I would have you send them notwithstanding.

I CANNOT

I CANNOT help considering myself as a sportsman (though God knows how poor a one in every sense!) and the company as my game. They *fly up* for a little time; and then *settle* again. My cue is, to discharge my *piece* when I observe a number together. This week, they are straggling round about their pasture, the town: the next, they will flock into it with violent appetites; and then I discharge my little piece amongst them.—I assure you, I shall be very easy about the acquisition of any fame by this thing; all I much wish is, to lose none: and indeed I have so little to lose, that this consideration scarcely affects me.

I DARE say it must be very incorrect; for I have added eight or ten stanzas within this fortnight. But inaccuracy is more excusable in ludicrous poetry than in any other. If it strikes *any*, it must be merely people of *taste*; for people of *wit* without taste (which comprehends the larger part of the critical tribe) will unavoidably despise it. I have been at some pains to secure myself from A. Philips's misfortune, of mere *childishness*, "Little charm of placid mien, &c." I have added a ludicrous index, purely to shew (fools) that I am in jest:—and my motto, "O quàm sol habitabiles illustrat oras, maxime principum," is calculated for the same purpose. You cannot conceive how large the number is of those that mistake burlesque

lesque for the very foolishness it exposes (which observation I made once at The Rehearsal, at Tom Thumb, at Chrononhotonthologos; all which are pieces of elegant humour). I have some mind to pursue this caution further; and advertise it, "The School-mistress, &c." A very *childish* performance every body knows (*novorum more*). But if a person seriously calls this, or rather burlesque, a childish or low species of poetry, he says wrong; for the most regular and formal poetry may be called trifling, folly, and weakness, in comparison of what is written with a more *manly* spirit in ridicule of it.—I have been plagued to death about the ill execution of my designs.—Nothing is certain in London but expence, which I can ill bear. Believe me, *till death*,

Yours, sincerely and particularly,

W. SHENSTONE.

XXVI. To the same; with a humorous Description of his Conduct in regard to Form and Equipage.

Dear Sir,

The Leasowes, Nov. 1742.

PRESUMING you may be at Tiffington by this time, I write to solicit a description of the several adventures, accidents, and phenomena, that have amused

mused you in your travels; and will equally affect
 me as they relate to you. Above all things, be par-
 ticular in regard to your calculations respecting Mic-
 kleton. I would have certainly met you there, as
 you desired me: there is no company I am fonder
 of than yours and your sister's; and no place at
 which I have spent more agreeable hours than Mic-
 kleton. But your brother has lost one of his recom-
 mendations in my eye; that is, his *irregularity* of
 house-keeping. He has several left which are suf-
 ficient to preserve my utmost esteem; but that was
 a jewel indeed! I love to go where there is nothing
 much more in form than myself. I have no ob-
 jection to visit *young, unsettled people*, with a moun-
 tebank's inconsistency in my equipage. But where a
 considerable family keeps up its forms (as marriage
 requires), I should not care to appear with an hired
 horse, and a *Sancho* for my valet. The case is, I
 could live in a way genteel enough, and uniformly
 so; but then I must forego megrims, whims, toys,
 and so forth. Now, though it gives me pain, *someti-*
times, not to appear of a piece; yet that *infrequent*
 pain is not a balance for the substantial happiness
 which I find in an urn, a seal, a snuff box, an engrav-
 ing, or a bust. Ambition, too, as it puts me upon
 wishing to make a figure, makes me very indifferent
 as to making a common every-day-gentlemanly
 figure; and saves me from appearing solicitous a-
 bout the "*res mediocriter splendida*," by raising my
 imagination

imagination *bigder*. I pour out my vanity to you in cataracts; but I hope you will rather consider it as a mark of my *confidence*, and, consequently, my sincere esteem and affection: for, I take it, the former seldom subsists without the latter. And as to what I said about my love of flattery, I hope, you will not construe it as any *hint*; neither, if I am right, would you be so ungenerous as to comply with me. I sincerely think that flattery amongst foes is absolutely desirable; amongst one's *common acquaintance*, a behaviour *rather inclining to it*; but amongst *friends*, its consequences are of too dangerous a nature.

I AM so unhappy in my wintery, unvisited state, that I can almost say with Dido, "*tædet cœli con- vexa tueri.*" I am miserable, to think that I have not thought enough to amuse me. I walk a day together, and have no idea but what comes in at my eyes. I long for some subject about the size of Philips's *Cyder*, to settle *heavily* about; something that I could enrich by episodes drawn from the English history. *Stanhenge* has some of the advantages I like; but seems a dead, lifeless title. If you chance to think of a subject which you do not chuse to *adorn* yourself, send it me to *write upon*.

I SHALL be vastly desirous to see you here in spring; and am in hopes Whistler will stay a month with

with me. I have sent an imperious letter about his dilatory correspondence.—He mentioned you in his last letter; was going to Oxford; thence to London; where, if he stays till February, I may see him. I hope you will write the very next post: you cannot oblige me or please me more than by so doing; if you think I deserve to be pleased, or am worth obliging. Adieu!

W. S.

XXVII. To the same, from Town; with a Specimen of Plays and Politics.

From Mr. Shuckburgh's,
Bookseller, in Fleet-
Street, your Brother's
Dear Mr. Graves, Lodgings; about 1743.

I HAVE just been spending my evening at a coffee-house; and, notwithstanding the confused effect of liquor, am sitting down to write to a person of the clearest head I know. The truth is, I write to please myself; which I can do no other way so effectually; upon which account, you are not obliged to me for the *advances* I make in correspondence. Extraordinary things will be expected from my *situation*; but extraordinary things ought never to be expected from *me*. I keep no political company, nor

H. W.

2

desire

desire any, as, I believe, you know. If you enquire after the stage,—I have not seen Garrick; but, more fortunately for *you*, your brother *has*. Me nothing has so much transported as young Cibber's *exhibition* of Parolles, in Shakespear's "*All's well that ends well*." The character is admirably written by the author; and, I fancy, I can discover a great number of hints which it has afforded to Congreve in his Bluff. I am apt to think a person, after he is twelve years old, laughs annually less and less: less heartily, however; which is much the same. I think Cibber elicited from me as sincere a laugh as I can ever recollect. Nothing, sure, can be comparable to his representation of Parolles in his bully-character; except the figure he makes as a shabby gentleman. In his first dress he is tawdry, as you may imagine: in the last, he wears a rusty black coat, a black stock, a black wig with a Ramillie, a pair of black gloves; and a face!—which causes five minutes laughter.—Instead of politics, I have transcribed these epigrams from the Evening Post—though I hate transcribing:

"The CHOICE, to Sir ROBERT ———"

"When opposition against power prevail'd;
"When artful eloquence and bribery fail'd;
"Timely you quit the ship you could not steer,
"Disdain the commons, and ascend a peer:

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"Conscious

"Conscious that you deserve to *bleed* or *swing*,
"You chuse the axe as nobler than the string."

"The Opposition.

"With huge Antæus as Alcides strove,
"The son of Neptune one, and one of Jove,
"Oft as he threw the giant on the ground,
"His strength redoubled by the fall he found.
"Th' unwieldy monster, sprung of mother Earth,
"From *her* had vigour, as from her he'd birth:
"Barag'd, the hero a new method tries;
"High lifts in air, and, as he mounts, he dies."

I THINK the last a good thought; the first not
a bad one, and what I have had in my head a
thousand times. I saw Mr. Fitzherbert at Nando's,
but chose not to reconnoitre him there, though to
ask after *you*. I purpose waiting on him at his
lodgings for the same end. Pray write soon to
me. I wish I could say more to deserve it from
you—I would fain deviate from the common road
in every letter I send you; but am so very uniform-
ly your friend, that I cannot vary my manner of
expressing how *much* I am so, which is all my letters
aim at. Adieu!

W. SHENSTONE.

XXVIII. To the same, with various Schemes of Composition.

Dear Mr. Graves, Feb. 1743.

Y^{OU} say it is no way displeasing to you to receive my letters; if you say the thing that is not, the fault, like others, produces its own punishment. You are now my only correspondent. I do not know what reason Whistler has for not caring to write, unless he thinks that we ought not to trouble ourselves about one another, but bend our whole endeavours to mend our fortunes; though I do not know his imaginations. I was afraid, after what I had said concerning *fameness* in my last, that you would interpret it to your own disadvantage; but was too lazy to write my letter again, trusting that I could deny the extent of my complaint to any one besides myself in some future letter. There is as much variety in your genius, as fortune can introduce into your circumstances.

SOME time next week, do I purpose to set out for London. The reasons for my going at all do *barely* preponderate. I cannot, *conscientiously*, print any thing. I have two or three little matters in hand: none that I am greatly fond of, much less that are at all mature. One is, what you have seen, though in its mortal state, "Flattery, or the fatal Exotic;"

so very quotidian and copious a subject, that I dislike it entirely. Another, "Elegies in Hammond's "Metre," but upon *real* and natural subjects: this I have objections to. A third, "An Essay on Re-
"serve;" the subject genteel, I think, but scarce ten lines finished. A fourth, "An Essay, in blank
"Verse, on Oeconomy, with Advice to Poets on
"that Head, concluding with a ludicrous Descrip-
"tion of a Poet's Apartment." I think it were better to *annex* that poem thus, to prevent its clashing, like an earthen pot, against Philips's silver vase, though his humour lies chiefly in the language. My favourite scheme is a poem, in blank verse, upon Rural *Elegance*, including cascades, temples, grottos, hermitages, green-houses, which introduces my favorite episode of the Spanish lady (you will wonder *how*, but I think *well*) to close the first book. The next, running upon planting, &c. will end with a vista terminated by an old abbey, which introduces an episode concerning the effects of Romish power, interdicts, &c. in imitation of Lucretius's "Plague of Athens," taken from Thucydides, Virgil's Murrain, and Ovid's Pestilence, &c. The two episodes in great forwardness;—but, alas! I do not like formal didactic poetry, and shall never be able to finish aught *but* the episodes, I doubt: unless I allow myself to treat the rest in *my own* manner, transiently—as Camilla skimmed over the wheat-stubble.

I HAVE

I HAVE altered this ballad, you see; I doubt, not to your mind: but send your criticisms, and I will be all obedience. From London I will send you mine on your more important poem: your critique will be important upon my silly affair; mine silly, I am afraid, upon your momentous one—but you do not think it momentous, as you ought. Direct to Nando's. I am

Your most sincere and affectionate friend
and humble servant,

W. S.

I QUESTION whether I should be more unhappy in any mere *mechanical* employment, for instance, making nails (which seems to deal as much in *repetition* as any trade), than I am in great part of my time when my head is unfit for study.—My neighbour is gone to London, and has left me a legacy of franks; so I shall be able to return your poem, &c. at least by parcels. I strenuously purpose to be there (or to set out) next week; but, as I am here at present, I think you ought to pay some deference to the *vis inertiae*, at least to the centripetal force of matter, and direct to The Leasowes one more letter, with your opinion concerning the various readings in the trifle I inclose, writing the first post that you well can.—Once more adieu!

Feb. 16, 1743.

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XXIX. To

XXIX. To the same.

Dear Mr. Graves,

DR. Swift would not have scrupled to print your parody, with his name to it. Why should you, without your name? I had a violent inclination to print it in a large folio, four leaves, price four pence: but I dare not do it, for fear you should think it of evil importance with regard to the clergy. You excell me infinitely in a way in which I take most pleasure; odd picturesque description. Send me word whether I shall print it or no—and that right soon.—I have lingered in town till now, and did not receive your letter till this morning.—I do not know whether I shall send you with this letter a little thing which I wrote in an afternoon, and, with proper demands of being concealed as the author, sold for two guineas. Next time I am in town, I will get money like a haberdasher. I will amuse myself with finding out the people's weak side, and to furnish them with *suitable nonsense*.—I would have you do the same.—Make your wit bear your charges. Indeed, as to the little parody you send, it would fix your reputation with men of sense as much as (greatly more than) the whole tedious character of Parson Adams. I read it half a year ago; the week after I came to town: but made Mr. Shuckburgh take it again, imagining it altogether a very mean performance.

formance.—I liked a tenth part pretty well; but, as Dryden says of Horace (unjustly), he shews his teeth without laughing: the greater part is *unnatural* and *unhumorous*. It has some advocates; but, I observe, those not such as I ever esteemed tasters. Finally, what makes *you* endeavour to like it?

My printer was preparing his bill for The Schoolmistress, when I stopped him short, with a hint to go to Doddsley, who has not yet reckoned with me for Hercules. Let *the dead* bury their dead. Dr. Young's Complaint is the best thing that has come out this season (these *twenty years*, Pope says) except mine, for so *thinks* every author, who does not think proper to say so: poor Pope's history in Cibber's Letter, and the print of him upon the Mount of Love (the *coarsest* is most *humorous*), must surely mortify him. Your sister does me great honour to think my hint any thing; but I am quite zealous in my approbation of that Scotch lady's hair. I will *ever* aim at *oddness* for the future; it is cheaper to follow taste than fashion, and whoever he be that devotes himself to *taste* will be *odd* of course.—You send me the verses on Lord Ilay: they were hacked about town three months ago, and I saw them. The town is certainly the scene for a man of curiosity.—I do not purpose to be long away; but I must think of retrenching.—I have ten thousand things to tell you, but I have not room. Such people as

we should meet as regularly to compare notes as tradesmen do to settle accounts, but oftener; there is no good comes of long reckonings;—I shall forget half—I think it should be four days in a fortnight—it would not do;—it would make one *mindful* of, and consequently more uneasy on account of, absence. Every one gets posts, preferments, but myself.—Nothing but my ambition can set me on a footing with them, and make me easy. Come then, lordly pride; &c. The devil thought with me in Milton,

“All is not lost, th’ unconquerable will,”

“And study never to submit or yield.”

I HAVE been in new companies; but I see no reason to contradict my assertion, that I find none I like *equally with you*. Adieu!

W. SHENSTONE.

XXX. To Mr. Jago, from London.

Dear friend, 1743.

I SHALL send you but a very few lines, being so much indisposed with a cold, that I can scarce tell how to connect a sentence. I am just got into lodgings at a goldsmith's—a dangerous situation, you

you will say, for me; "Actum est, illicet, permissi!" Not so;—for of late I have not so violent a taste for toys as I have had; and I can look even on snuff-boxes "oculo irretorto."

LONDON is really dangerous at this time; the pick-pockets, formerly content with mere *filching*, make no scruple to knock people down with bludgeons in *Fleet-street* and the *Strand*, and that at no later hour than eight o'clock at night: but in the *Piazzas*, *Covent-garden*, they come in large bodies, armed with cut-throats, and attack whole parties, so that the danger of coming out of the play-houses is of some weight in the opposite scale, when I am disposed to go to them oftener than I ought.—There is a poem of this season, called "The Pleasures of Imagination," worth your reading; but it is an expensive quarto; if it comes out in a less size, I will bring it home with me. Mr. Pope (as Mr. Outing, who has been with Lord Bolingbroke, informs me) is at the point of death.—My Lord Carteret said yesterday in the house, "That the French and Spaniards had actually said, they would attempt a second invasion."—There is a new play acted at *Drury Lane*, "*Mahomet*," translated from the French of *Voltaire*; but I have no great opinion of the subject, or the original author as a poet; and my diffidence is rather improved by the testimony of those who have seen it.—I lodge between the two coffee-houses,

houses, George's and Nando's, so that I partake of the expensiveness of both, as heretofore. I have no acquaintance in town, and but slender inducement to stay; and yet, probably, I shall loiter here for a month.

T—H— was knighted against his will, and had a demand made upon him for an hundred pounds before he could get out of St. James's; so soon are felt the inconveniencies of grandeur!—He came out of the court in a violent rage, "G—d! Jack, what doest think?—I am knighted!—the devil of a knight, e'faith!" I believe he was sincere in his disgust; for there had been two barge-masters knighted in his neighbourhood some time before.

I saw, coming up, Lady Fans's grotto, which they say, cost her five thousand pounds; about three times as much as her house is worth. It is a very beautiful disposition of the finest collection of shells I ever saw—Mr. Powis's woods, which are finer.—Mean time, if I had three hundred pounds to lay out about The Leafowes, I could bring my ambition to peaceable terms. I am, dear Sir, with all affection, yours and Mrs. Jago's.

W. SHENSTONE.

WRITE soon. It is this moment reported that Pope is dead.

XXXI. To

XXXI. To the same.

Dear Sir,

1745.

I LONG heartily to talk over affairs with you *tête à tête*; but am an utter enemy to the fatigue of transcribing what might pass well enough in conversation.—I shall say nothing more concerning my departure from L—, than that it was necessary, and therefore excusable.—I have been since with a gentleman upon the borders of Wales, Bishop's Castle, from whence I made a digression one day beyond Offa's Dyke: saw mountains which converted all that I *had* seen into mole-hills; and houses which changed The Leasowes into Hampton Court: where they talk of a glazed window as a piece of magnificence; and where their highest idea of his Majesty is, that he can ride in such a coach as 'Squire Jones or 'Squire Pryce's. The woman of the inn, at one place, said, "Glas (in windows) was very genteel, that it was; but she could not afford such finery."

You agree with the rest of the married world in a propensity to make proselytes. This inclination in some people gives one a kind of dread of the matter. They are ill-natured, and can only wish one in their own state because they are unhappy: like persons that have the plague, who, they say, are ever

desirous to propagate the infection. I make a contrary conclusion when you commend marriage, as you seem to do, when you wish Miss — may reconcile me to more than the *name* of wife. I know not what you have heard of my amour: probably more than I can thoroughly confirm to you. And what if I should say to you, that marriage was not once the subject of our conversation?

—— “Nec conjugis unquam

“Prætendi tædas, aut hæc in fœdera veni.”

Do not you think every thing in nature strangely improved since you were married, from the tea-table to the *warming-pan*?

I WANT to see Mrs. Jago's hand-writing, that I may judge of her temper; but she must write something in my praise. Pray see you to it, in your next letter.

I COULD parodize my Lord Carteret's letter from Dettingen, if I had it by me. “Mrs. Arnold (thanks
“be praised!) has this day gained a very considera-
“ble victory. The scold lasted two hours. Mrs.
“S—e was posted in the hall, and Mrs. Arnold upon
“the stair-case; which superiority of ground was of
“no small service to her in the engagement. The
“fire lasted the whole space, without intermission;
“at

" at the close of which, the enemy was routed, and
" Mrs. Arnold kept the field."

Did you hear the song to the tune of " The
" Cuckow ?"

" The Baron stood behind a tree,

" In woeful plight, for nought heard he

" But Cannon, Cannon, &c.

" O word of fear !

" Unpleasing to a German ear."

The notes that fall upon the word " Cannon" express the sound with its echo admirably.

I SEND you my pastoral elegy (or ballad, if you think that name more proper), on condition that you return it with ample remarks in your next letter : I say " return it," because I have no other copy, and am too indolent to take one. Adieu !

W. S.

XXXII. To

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W. S.

XXXII. To

XXXII. To Mr. GRAVES, describing his Situation,
and State of Health, &c.

Dear Mr. Graves,

The Leafowes.

TO-MORROW morning I set out for Cheltenham, to make trial of the waters there. I shall, perhaps, add to this letter at several stages, and conclude it at the place to which I am going; so that, like those springs, you may, perhaps, find it impregnated with the nature of all those places through which it passes; perhaps quite the contrary.

—, if I mistake not the man, is an encourager of works of taste, &c. though I am going to instance this oddly: he was a hearty stickler for my poem upon Hercules at Bath, as D. Jago sent me word. Perhaps it was complaisance to Mr. Lyttelton, with whom, Charles, &c. he is intimate, if, as I said before, I do not mistake the person. I flatter myself, I do not; and I hope that we two shall ever find the same persons, or the same kind of persons, our friends, and also our enemies.

If I get over this ill habit of body, depend upon it, I *will* have a *reverend* care of my health, as Sir John Falstaff advises the Chief Justice. I solve all the tempests that disturb my constitution into
wind:

wind: it plagues me, first, in the shape of a bad appetite, then indigestion, then lowness of spirits and a flux of pale water, and at night by watchings, restlessness, twitchings of my nerves, or a sleep more distracted than the most active state of watchfulness. But I think purging lessens all these symptoms, and I trust my scheme that I am entering upon is right.

I WAS on Monday at Hagley, to wait on Mr. Lyttelton, who was gone to Sir John Astley's, to see his grand edifice.—As to Mrs. Lyttelton, if her affability is not artificial, I mean, if it does not owe its original (as it *ought to do its management*) to art, I cannot conceive a person more amiable;—but *sense* and *elegance* cannot be feigned: to *exhibit* them, is to *have* them.

How is my song set? Miss Carrington procured it that favour; but I have never seen a copy, nor knew of its being to be printed. Howard has set another of mine, which I received last post; but my harpsichord is out of order, and I have found no one yet to explain the hieroglyphics which convey it. You may probably find it in some future number of the British Orpheus. “By the side of a stream, &c.”

I AM in as good spirits this instant as ever I was in my life: only “*Mens turbidum latatur.*” My head is a little confused; but I often think seriously, that

that I ought to have the most ardent and *practical* gratitude (as the Methodists chuse to express themselves) for the advantages that I have: which, though not eminently shining, are such, to speak the truth, as suit my particular humour, and consequently deserve all kind of acknowledgement. If a poet should address himself to God Almighty, with the most earnest thanks for his goodness in allotting him an estate that was over-run with shrubs, thickets, and coppices, variegated with barren rocks and precipices, or floated three parts in four with lakes and marshes, rather than such an equal and fertile spot as the "sons of men" delight in; to my apprehension, he would be guilty of no absurdity.—But of this I have composed a kind of prayer, and intend to write a little speculation on the subject; this kind of gratitude I assuredly ought to have, and have. For my health, if one reflects, a country-fellow's stock of it would be unfit for solitude; would dispose one rather to bodily feats, and, what Falstaff calls in Poins, *gambol* faculties, than mental contemplations; and would give one that kind of pain which springs from *impatience*. My constitution was given me originally good; and with regard to it now (as G. Barnwell says) "What am I?—What *"I have made myself."* Or, to speak with Milton,

"Him

"Him after all disputes
 "Forc'd I absolve: all my evasions vain,
 "And reasonings, tho' thro' mazes, only lead
 "But to my own conviction. First and last
 "On me, me only, as the source and spring
 "Of all corruption, all the blame lights due."

Though this is but vulgarly expressed in Milton
 neither.

JAGO has been here this last week, and I drove
 him to Dudley Castle, which I long to shew you:
 I never saw it (since I was the size of my pen) be-
 fore: it has great romantic beauty, though perhaps
 Derbyshire may render it of small note in your
 eye.

ONE is tempted to address the K— as Harry the
 Eighth does his wife, *mutatis mutandis*:

"Go thy ways, George!
 "Whoe'er he be that shall assert he has
 "A bolder king, let him in nought be trusted
 "For saying false in that ——"

I HAVE a mind to write an ode in praise of him,
 and in rivalship of Cibber.—Mine should be of the
 ballad style and familiarity, as expressing the senti-
 ments of a person returning from a dislike to a
 thorough approbation of him, which seems, at pre-

sent, the sense of the nation.—But herein I am not in earnest.—

My pen has run on a whole page at random. It amuses me to encourage it, and so I will try to get a frank.

I AM this moment arrived at Cheltenham, after an expensive and fatiguing journey. I called yesterday at Mickleton; saw the portico, and snapped up a bit of mutton at your brother's; drank a dish of tea with Miss S—; and, in opposition to the strongest remonstrances, persisted in an endeavour to reach Cheltenham after five o'clock. The consequence was, that, about ten, I found myself travelling back again towards Stowe; and had undoubtedly wandered all night in the dark, had I not been fortunately met by a waggoner's servant, who brought me back to the worst inn but one I ever lay at, being his master's.—Here I am: which is all I shall say in this letter.

Adieu!

W. S.

XXXIII. To

XXXIII. To Mr. JAGO, on the same.

The Leaflower, Saturday,
July the 9th, 1743.

Dear Mr. Jago,

IT is not a contrived apology, or an excuse, which I am going to offer for the disappointments I have given you. I have actually been so much out of order ever since I wrote to you, nay, ever since I *formed a design* of a Sunday expedition to L—, that it never has been in my *power* to execute my intentions. My vertigo has not *yet* taken away my senses; God knows how soon it may do; but my nerves are in such a condition, that I can scarce get a wink of even *disordered* rest for whole nights together. May you never know the misery of such involuntary vigils? I ride every day almost to fatigue; which only tends to make my want of sleep more *sensible*, and not in the least to remove it. I have *spirits* all day, good ones; though my head is dizzy, and I never enterprize any study of greater subtlety than a news-paper. I cannot say the journey to L— would be at all *formidable* to me; for I ride about fifteen miles, as I compute it, every day before dinner. But the nights from home would be insupportable to me. I have fatigued Mrs. Arnold's assiduity, to the injury of her health; by occasioning her to sit in my room a'nights, light my candle, put it out again, make me perspiratory

wheys, and slops; and am amused by the most silly animadversions she is capable of making. I never knew her usefulness till now; but I ~~now~~ prefer her to *all of her station*. If I get over this disorder, concerning which I have had apprehensions, you may depend upon seeing me the first Sunday I dare venture forth. I hope *you* continue mending. The benefit of *riding* is only not universal, and would cure *me* too, could I but make one previous advance towards health. Have you tried cold-bathing? Perhaps it may not suit your case. I wish I had not dropt it. I take my fluctuation of nerves to be caused, as that of the sea is, by wind; which I am continually pumping up, and yet find it still renewed. When I am just sinking to sleep, a sudden twitch of my nerves calls me back again—to watchfulness and vexation! I consider myself as in the state of the philosopher, who held a bullet betwixt his finger and thumb, which, whenever he was about to nod, was ordered so as to fall into a large brass pan, and wake him—that he might pursue his lucubrations.

I WILL mention one circumstance regarding the weakness of my nerves;—and not my spirits, for I told you those were tolerable:—the least noise that is, even the falling of a fire-shovel upon the floor, if it happen unexpectedly, shocks my whole frame; and I actually believe that a gun fired behind my back,

back, unawares, amidst the stillness of the night, would go near to kill me with its noise.

I AM just going to bed; and dare not be any more attentive, as I hope to close my eyes for a minute. So fare you well!

It is now six o'clock in the morning, and I have had about five hours middling sleep; which encourages me greatly: so I will *hope* to be able to see you next Sunday sevensnight.

WHAT think you of the battle? Are not you so much in love with our King, that you could find in your heart to serve him in any profitable post he might assign you?

CAPT. L—— is wounded in the thigh.

WHEN I ride in my chair round my neighbourhood, I am as much stared and wondered at, as a giant would be that should walk through Pall-mall. My vehicle is at *least* as uncommon hereabouts as a blazing comet. My chief pleasure lies in finding out a thousand roads, and delightful little haunts near home, which I never dreamt of: egregious solitudes, and most incomparable bye-lanes; where I can as effectually lose myself within a mile of home, as if I were benighted in the deserts of Arabia. Adieu!

XXXIV. To Mr. GRAVES, written in Hay-Harvest.

Dear Mr. Graves,

July 3, 1743.

I DID not part from you without a *great deal* of melancholy. To think of the *short* duration of those interviews which are the objects of one's *continual* wishes, has been a reflection that has plagued me of old! I am sure I returned home with it then, more aggravated, as I foresaw myself returning to the same series of melancholy hours from which you had a while relieved me, and which I had *particularly* suffered under all this last spring! I wish to God, you might happen to be settled not far from me: a day's journey distance, however; I mean, an *easy* one. But the odds are infinitely against me. I must only *rely* for my happiness on the hopes of a never-ceasing correspondence!

Soon after you were gone, I received my packet. The history of Worcestershire is mere stuff. T—— I am so fond of, that, I believe, I shall have his part of the collection bound over again, neatly and separately. But sure Hammond has no right to the least *inventive* merit, as the preface-writer would insinuate. I do not think there is a single thought, of any eminence, that is not literally translated. I am astonished he could content himself with being so little an original.

Mr.

Mr Lyttelton and his lady are at Hagley. A malignant caterpillar has demolished the beauty of all our *large* oaks. Mine are secured by their littleness. But, I guess, the park suffers; a large wood near me being a mere winter piece for nakedness.

At present, I give myself up to riding and thoughtlessness; being resolved to make trial of *their* efficacy towards a tolerable degree of health and spirits. I wish I had you for my director. I should proceed with great confidence of success; though I am brought very low by two or three fits of a fever since I saw you. Had I written to you in the midst of my dispirited condition, as I was going, you would have had a more tender and unaffected letter than I *can* write at another time: what I think, perhaps, at all times; but what sickness can alone elicit from a temper fearful of whining.

SURELY the "*nunc formosissimus annus*" is to be limited to hay-harvest. I could give my reasons: but you will imagine them to be, the activity of country people in a pleasing employment; the full verdure of the summer; the prime of pinks, woodbines, jasmynes, &c. I am old; very old; for few things give me so much mechanical pleasure as lolling on a bank in the very heat of the sun,

"When the old come forth to play

"On a sun-shine holiday—"

And yet it is as much as I can do to keep Mrs. Arnold from going to neighbouring houses in her smock, in despite of decency and my known disapprobation.

I FIND myself more of a patriot than I ever thought I was. Upon reading the account of the battle, I found a very sensible pleasure, or, as the Methodists term it, perceived my heart *enlarged*, &c. The map you sent me is a pretty kind of *toy*, but does not enough particularize the scenes of the war, &c. which was the end I had in view when I sent for it.

“O DURA messorum illa!” About half the appetite, digestion, strength, spirits, &c. of a mower, would make me the happiest of mortals! I would be understood literally, and precisely.

Adieu!

W. S.

XXXV. To the same, after the Disappointment of a Visit.

Dear Sir,

1743.

I AM tempted to begin my letter as Memmius does his harangue. “*Multa me dehortantur à vobis, ni studium virtutis vestræ omnia exsuperet.*”

—You contrive interviews of about a minute’s duration;

ration; and you make appointments in order to disappoint one; and yet, at the same time that your proceedings are thus vexatious, force one to bear testimony to the inestimable value of your friendship! I do insist upon it, that you ought to compound for the disappointment you have caused me, by a little letter every post you stay in town. I shall now scarce see you till next summer, or spring at soonest; and then I may probably take occasion to visit you, under pretence of seeing Derbyshire. Truth is, your prints have given me *some* curiosity to see the original places. I am grateful for your intentions with regard to giving me part of them, and impertinent in desiring you to convey them to me as soon as you can well spare them. Let me know if they are sold separately at the print-shops. I think to recommend them to my new acquaintance, Mr. Lytton Brown. I like the humour of the ballad you mention, but am more obliged for your partial opinion of me. The notes that fall upon the word "Cannon, Cannon," are admirably expressive of the sound, I dare say: I mean, jointly with its echo; and so, I suppose, you will think, if you ever attended to the Tower-guns. I find I cannot afford to go to Bath previously to my London-journey; though I look upon it as a proper method to make my residence in town more agreeable. I shall, probably, be there about the first of December; or before, if I can accelerate my friend Whistler's journey.

OT. IVXXX

The

The pen I write with is the most disagreeable of pens! But I have little else to say; only this—that our good friend Jack Dolman is dead at Aldridge, his father's benefice.

I BEG, if you have leisure, you would inclose me in a frank the following songs, with the notes: "Stella and Flavia," "Gentle Jeffy," "Sylvia, wilt thou waste thy prime?" and any other that is new, I should be glad of that number of the British Orpheus which has my song in it, if it does not cost above six-pence. Make my compliments to your brother and sister; and believe me, in the common forms, but in no common degree,

Dear Mr. Graves's

Most affectionate friend and servant,

The Leasowes,
Nov. 9th, 1743.

W. SHENSTONE.

Do write out the whole ballad of "The Baron flood
"behind a tree."

XXXVI. To the same, on the Receipt of a Present of Prints.

Dear Sir,

The Leasowes, Dec. 23, 1743.

YOU may reasonably have expected a letter before now, either as an acknowledgement for your genteel present, or at least by way of information that I had received it. The prints have given me a pleasure, which, however considerable, would soon have languished, if I had bought them at a shop; but which is now built upon the esteem I have for the giver, and cannot have a more durable foundation.—As for the rest, I am most pleased with the view of Matlock, and shall have no peace of mind till I have seen the original. I have been gilding the frames, and wishing all the while for your company.

I WILL alter the ballad according to your advice; dividing it into three parts, and adding a stanza or two to the shortest, some time or other. I have had no opportunity of trying the tunes. "Arno's vale" has pretty words, and recommends itself to one's imagination by the probability that it was written on a real occasion—the similitude of rhimes in the close inexcusable. For all that has been the subject of my letter hitherto, as the country people say, I
can

can but thank you, and I do very sincerely; though as to the songs I will re-pay you.

I HAVE your poem by me, which I have read often with the greatest pleasure. I have many observations to make; and only defer the communication till I know whether you have a copy at Tiffington to turn to. I think, the most *polite* and *suitable* title to it would run thus: "The Villa, a Poem; containing a Sketch of the present Taste in Rural Embellishments, written in 1740." Your preface has a pretty thought towards the close; otherwise is on no account to be admitted. Pardon my freedom; but, I think, there is no manner of occasion for a preface; and those strokes, which I *know* to be real modesty in *you*, the world will undoubtedly impute to affectation. —If you give me encouragement, I will be very minute in my criticisms, allowing you to reject ten to one that you admit of.

WHISTLER is gone to Bristol, and has bilked me. —I said, he is gone; but, I believe, he is only upon going —I linger at home, in hopes of gleaning up a little health, and through a dread of being ill in a place where I can be less attended on. —I can continually *find out* something in my preceding diet that, I *think*, disorders me; so that I am constantly in hopes of growing well: —but, perhaps, I never shall:

"Optima

"Optima quæque dies miseris mortalibus ævi

"*Prima fugit, subeunt morbi* —"

WHEN I was a school-boy, I never knew there *was* any such thing as perspiration; and now, half my time is taken up in considering the immediate connexion betwixt that and health, and endeavouring to promote it.

Mr. Lyttelton has built a kind of alcove in his park, inscribed, "SEDES CONTEMPLATIONIS," near his hermitage. Under the aforesaid inscription is "OMNIA VANITAS:"—the sides ornamented with sheeps-bones, jaws, skulls, &c. festoon-wise. In a nitch over it, an owl.

As to schemes, I have none with regard to the world, women, or books. And I hate, and have deferred writing to you (for some days) for that reason. I am sick of exhibiting so much sameness:—I am constantly poring over some Classic, which I consider as one of Idleness's better shapes. But I am impatient to be doing something that may tend to better my situation in some respect or other. It is *encouragement* can alone inspire one.

— "Multa & præclare minantem

"*Vivere nec recte, nec suaviter* —"

expresses the whole of me. Thus my epistles persevere in the plaintive style; and I question whether
the

the sight of them does not, ere now, give you the vapours. I have an old aunt that visits me sometimes, whose conversation is the perfect counterpart of them. She shall fetch a long-winded sigh with Dr. Young for a wager; though I see *his* *Suspiria* are not yet finished. He has *relapsed* into "Night the Fifth." I take his case to be wind in a great measure, and would advise him to take rhubarb in powder, with a little nutmeg grated amongst it, as I do.

DEAR Mr. G—, write down to me; and believe me to be, invariably,

Your most sincere

and obliged friend, &c.

W. SHENSTONE.

XXXVII. To the same, with Observations on Hypocrisy, &c.

Dear Sir,

1743.

YOU must know, my last letter to you was written before I received yours from Tiffington; and I should take shame upon myself for not answering it, were I not furnished with this excuse—that I waited for a frank for you.—There are but few things

things I have to say to you, and such as are not worth transcribing; yet, as our distance from one another requires it, I will scrawl them over as negligently as I can, to let you see I lay no stress upon them. A good excuse for laziness! you will say: and lazy enough I am, God knows!—I believe, any one who knows me thoroughly will think, that there never was so great an inconsistency as there is betwixt my words (in my poem) and my actions.—This is what the world calls hypocrisy, and is determined to look upon with *peculiar* aversion. But, I think, the hypocrite is a *half-good* character. A man certainly, considering the force of precedent, deserves some praise who keeps up appearances; and is, no doubt, as much to be commended for talking better than he acts, as he is to be blamed for acting worse than he talks. So much for casuistry. I would seem, you must know, to have some meritorious views in talking *virtuously*; but who does not know that every one who writes poetry looks directly with his face towards praise, and whatever else his eye takes in is viewed obliquely? Praise, as I said to foible-confessing W—, is the desired, the noted, and the adequate reward of poetry; in which sort he that rewards me, Heaven reward him, as Sir John Falstaff says. There is something very vain in repeating my own sayings; but I could not conscientiously use a joke to you which I had used in another letter, without owning it.—In short, it is necessary to

have some *earthly* aim in view; the next world, whether it be in reality near or far off, is always *seen* at a distance. All that the generality of young people can do is, to act *consistently with* their expectations there. Now, though fame, &c. be obviously enough in the eye of reason dissatisfactory; yet it is proper enough to suffer one's self to be deluded with the hopes of it, that is, it is proper to cherish some worldly hopes, that one may avoid impatience, spleen, and one sort of *despair*: I mean that of having no *hopes* here, because one sees nothing here that deserves them. If I were in your case, I would make all the efforts I was able towards being a Bishop. That should be my earthly aim: not but I would act with so much indifference as to bear all disappointment unconcernedly—as, I dare say, you will.—There is but one passion that I put upon an equally sprightly footing with ambition, and that is love; which, as it *regularly tends* to matrimony, requires certain favours from fortune and circumstance to render it proper to indulge in.—By this time you think me crazed—as it often happens to me to doubt, *seriously*, whether I am not: but if it be the “*mentis gratissimus error*,” I do not mind. You are very obliging to endeavour to continue my madness and vanity.—I should be as glad to see Mr. Graves your brother as any one I know: I live in a manner wherein he would find many things to exercise his good-nature.

PAMELA

PAMELA would have made one good volume; and I wonder the author, who has some *nice* natural strokes, should not have sense enough to see that.—I beg you will collect all the hints, &c. of your own, or others, that you think may tend to the improvement of my poem, against winter; that you would mention any flat lines, &c. Write me word some time ere you come over; but write to me immediately. I am

Yours faithfully,

W. Smeaton

XXXVIII. To a Friend, with a Parody.

Dear Sir,

The Leasowes,
March 1, 1743-4.

YOU are upon very *good* terms with me, and have been all along. I guessed the causes of your silence, and have been sincerely sorry for them; not however that I did not believe you were more happy than any one in the world who is neither a lover nor a poet, though not able to turn himself for money-bags.—I am really going to London; and am about the purchase of an elegant pair of pistols from Birmingham. I indulge myself in this expense, because they shall serve in two capacities; one while

to garnish my chair, another while my horse. And some time next week you will probably see your old friend on horse-back, armed at all points, and as very a knight to all appearance as any body.

—“Well! they say the Owl was a Quaker’s Daughter—one knows what one is, but one does not know what one SHALL be.” Ophelia in Hamlet.

BUT I digress. If I just call to see you, God forbid that I should be burthensome to you. I will send my horses to H—, and lodge there, or somewhere. But I am perfectly impatient to unbosom my soul to you, and to see Mrs. Jago, whom I should have mentioned first. Wednesday or Tuesday indeed seems the most likely day.—Though I am not sure; nor do you confine yourself.

Poor Mariett! I too am emaciated; but I hope, by means of some warm weather, to acquire *plus d'embonpoint*. I design to call upon him, and keep him in countenance.

My ballad, in the midst of your hurry, must appear as ridiculous as Cinna the poet does, when he swears nothing but death shall restrain him from addressing Brutus and Cassius (and that the night before the battle) with two doggrel verses—and those the worst I have ever read; and that makes the simile

the more just. It is now a good deal metamorphosed. Your parody is prodigiously droll: the first line delights me! I think I could furnish Mrs. K—— with as good mottoes, and as cheap, though I say it, as any-body; but, alas!— Did I send you the following parody or no, before? I believe not. *La voila!*

“ WHEN first, Philander, first I came

“ Where Avon rolls his winding stream,

“ The nymphs—how brisk! the swains—how gay!

“ To see *Astoria*, Queen of May!—

“ The parsons round, her praises sung!

“ The steeples, with her praises rung!—

“ I thought—no fight, that e’er was seen,

“ Could match the fight of Barel’s-green!—

“ BUT now, since old *Eugenio* dy’d—

“ The chief of poets, and the pride—

“ Now, meaner bards in vain aspire

“ To raise their voice, to tune their lyre!

“ Their lovely season, now, is o’er!

“ Thy notes, *Florelio*, please no more!—

“ No more *Astoria*’s smiles are seen!—

“ Adieu!—the sweets of Barel’s-green!—”

It is a kind of extempore, so excuse it.—You have seen the song of *Arno’s Vale*. I am

I am
H. 2

I AM taking part of my farm upon my hands, to see if I can succeed as a farmer;—but I am afraid I am under the sentence, “And, behold, whatsoever he taketh in hand, it shall not prosper.”

My good friend, I sincerely confide, that, however we may be separated, no time shall extenuate our mutual friendship. I am

Your zealous, unserviceable friend,

W. SHENSTONE.

XXXIX. To Mr. GRAVES, on Social Happiness.

Dear Mr. Graves, About 1745.

THERE is not a syllable you tell me concerning yourself in your last letter, but what applied to me is most literally true. I am sensible of the daily progress I make towards insignificance; and it will not be many years before you see me arrived at the *apophis ultra*. I believe it is absolutely impossible for me to acquire a considerable degree of knowledge, though I can understand things well enough at the time I read them. I remember a preacher at St. Mary's (I think it was Mr. E—) made a notable distinction betwixt *apprehension* and *comprehension*.

comprehension. If there be a real difference, probably it may find a place in the explication of my genius. I envy you a good *general* insight into the writings of the learned. I must aim at nothing higher than a well-concealed ignorance.—I was thinking, upon reading your letter, *when* it was that you and Mr. Whittier and I went out of the road of happiness. It certainly was where we first deviated from the turnpike-road of life. Wives, children, alliances, visits, &c. are necessary objects of our social passions; and whether or no we can, through particular circumstances, be happy *with*, I think it plain enough that it is not possible to be happy *without* them. All attachments to inanimate beauties, to curiosities, and ornaments, satiate us presently.—The fanciful tribe has the disadvantage to be naturally prone to err in the choice of *lasting* pleasures; and when our passions have habitually wandered, it is too difficult to reduce them into their proper channels. When this is the case, nothing but the change or variety of amusements stands any chance to make us easy, and it is not long ere the whole species is exhausted. I agree with you entirely in the necessity of a *sociable* life in order to be happy: I do not think it much a paradox, that any company is better than *none*. I think it obvious enough as to the present hour; and as to any future influence, solitude has exceeding savage effects on our dispositions.—I have wrote out my elegy: I lay no man-

ner of stress but upon the piety of it.—Would it not be a good kind of motto, applied to a person you know, that might be taken from what is said of *Ophelia* in *Hamlet*,

“ I tell thee, faithless priest !

“ A ministring angel shall *Ophelia* be

“ When thou art howling.”

I HAVE amused myself often with this species of writing since you saw me ; partly to divert my present *impatience*, and partly as it will be a picture of most that passes in my mind ; a portrait which *friends* may value.—I should be glad of your profile : if you have objections, I drop my request.—I should be heartily glad if you would come and live with me, for any space of time that you could find convenient. But I will depend on your coming over with Mr. Whistler in the spring. I may possibly take a jaunt towards you ere long : the road would furnish me out some visits ; and, by the time I reached you, perhaps, afford me a kind of climax of happiness. If I do not, I shall perhaps be a little time at Bath. I do not speak of this last as a scheme from which I entertain great expectations of pleasure. It is long since I have considered myself as *undone*. The world will not perhaps consider me in that light entirely, till I have married my maid. Adieu !

XL. To the same, with Observations on the Rebellion, and its probable Consequences.

Dear Mr. Graves,

The Leasowes,
Nov. 22, 1745.

MY life, for aught I see, will pass away just as it *has* done, without introducing sufficient improvement into my circumstances to give a cheerful cast to my correspondence. In *one* respect, in regard to my inviolable friendship for *you*, I hope you will hear with some satisfaction that I continue still the same. And this kind of *identity*, I think, I could promise you, though every circumstance in my fortune, every particle of my body, were changed; and others, ever so heterogeneous, substituted in their place. After this, it would be no compliment to say, that the *pretended* heir to these kingdoms could not alter it, were he to subvert the British constitution; which must, out of all doubt, be the consequence of his success. The rebellion, you may guess, is the subject of all conversation. Every individual nailer here takes in a news-paper (a more *pregnant* one by far than any of the London ones), and talks as familiarly of *kings* and *princes* as ever Master Shallow did of John of Gaunt. Indeed it is no bad thing that they do so; for I cannot conceive that the people want so much to be convinced by *sermons* of the absurdities of *popery*, as they do by

news-papers that it may possibly prevail. The reasons and arguments too in favour of the present Government are so *strong* and *obvious*, that even I, and every country squire, and every country clerk, and Sam Shaw the taylor, seem to be as much masters of them as the Bishops themselves. I must not say we could express them so politely.—I like Secker's the best of any sermon on this occasion. He gives his audience a view of such evil consequences from a *change*, as no man of sense can possibly doubt of, when fairly stated: and, I own, I cannot see one single *good* it could produce, in compensation for its inevitable and abundant *mischiefs*.—I have read Dr. Sherlock's sermon on this occasion: and I have read Mr. Warburton's; and, at your request, I will read his Legation.

I HAVE often thoughts of a jaunt as far as your country this winter. Some kind of pilgrimage I must make, to avoid a lethargy.—Public places I want to visit a little; to peep at and renew my idea of the *quærid's* vanity; but either Bath or London would steep me so far in poverty, that I should not probably emerge before the middle of next summer. I have spent this last summer agreeably enough with some of my young relations, Mr. Dolman's children.—They have an excellent taste for their years.—I have been upon several jaunts with the son to Litchfield, Worcester, Mr. Fletcher's, &c. amusing him,

him, what I could, under the loss of his father. Miss W—F—asked very earnestly after you. Two of the sisters have been with me at The Leasowes, and upon several parties of pleasure in my chair.—Broom is disposed of—I do not understand upon what inducement.—After all, I am miserable;—conscious to myself that I am too little selfish; that I ought now or never to aim at some addition to my fortune; and that I make large advances towards the common catastrophe of *better poets, poverty*.—I never can attend enough to some twelve-penny matter, on which a great deal depends.—My amour, so far as I indulge it, gives me some pleasure, and no pain in the world.—I have read Spenser once again: and I have added full as much more to my *School-mistress*, in regard to *number of lines*; *something* in point of *matter* (or *manner* rather) *which* does not displease me. I would be glad if Mr. — were, upon your request, to give his opinion of particulars, for two reasons; as you say he has some taste for this kind of writing, and as he is my enemy, and would, therefore, find out its deficiencies.

I HAVE a reason, of a most whimsical kind, why I would wish you to preserve this letter. Pray write soon, and believe me most affectionately

Your friend and humble servant,

W. SHENSTONE.

XLI. To

XLI. To the same, with Remarks on the Execution
and Behaviour of the Lords Kilmarnock and Bal-
merino.

Dear Mr. Graves,

1746, incunte anno.

I BELIEVE it is impossible for me to disagree with you on any other score, than the scanty pittances you allot me of your company; and, if I have disclosed any symptoms of resentment on that account, you will, perhaps, overlook them, out of regard to the motive from which they proceeded.— I thank you for your perusal of that trivial poem. If I were going to print it, I should give way to your remarks *implicitly*, and would not *dare* to do otherwise. But so long as I keep it in manuscript, you will pardon my silly prejudices, if I chuse to read and shew it with the addition of most of my new stanzas. I own, I have a fondness for several, imagining them to be *more* in Spenser's way, yet more independent on the antique phrase, than any part of the poem; and, on that account, I cannot yet prevail on myself to banish *them* entirely; but were I to print, I should (with *some* reluctance) give way to your sentiments (which I know are just), namely, that they render the work too diffuse and flimzy, and seem rather excrescences than essential parts of it,

BUT

BUT of these things I say no more now. I purpose staying a month with Mr. Whistler in December, if it suits him; and then I hope I shall have a great deal of your company. Let me hear something in your next of your *domestic affairs*. I beg you would not make any grand decision, without giving me some previous information. I esteem this as due to the friendship I have so long professed for you, and from the friendship you have so long professed for me.

I LOOK upon the death of the two Lords as equally decent upon their respective principles. Lord Kilmarnock, I suppose, joined the rebels through a view of bettering his circumstances, conscious to himself that he was guilty of a crime the moment he did so. This is agreeable to his speech before the Lords, and to that melancholy which he discovered upon the scaffold. Death, aggravated by guilt, would sit heavier upon him than upon the other, even supposing him to have had the same resolution. Balmerino's life was quite *une*, and his death equal to the character he aimed at. We are to observe, that he meant to suffer as a Friend to the Stewarts, a Soldier, and a Scotsman. The first he manifested when he came out of the Tower, by his reply of "God save King J—s;" the second, by his dress, and numberless ostentations of intrepidity; the last, by his plaid night-cap. Did you hear the story of his sending
ing

ing a message to Lord Kilmarnock? "That he had been practising how to lye upon the block; and had found out, the easiest way of receiving the blow was, to bite his tongue hard: or even if he bit it off, it was no matter, they should have no further use for it." His behaviour seems to have wanted coolness, or else to equal that of Adrian, Cato, Sir T. More, &c. or any of those heroes who had spirit enough to make an ostentation of their unconcern. I had, from the printed accounts of their behaviour, an idea of their persons, exactly conformable to the description I read afterwards in your paper;—but enough—you send me sterling matters of fact, and I return you tinsel observations.—I thank you for accenting Cromertie and Balmerino; I learnt Culloden from you *before*.

I HAVE had little company since I saw you.—One day indeed I was surprized by a visit from Mr. Thomson, Author of *The Seasons*.—Mr. Lyttelton introduced him.—I have not room to tell you all that passed.—They praised my place extravagantly;—proposed alterations, &c. Thomson was very facetious, and very complaisant; invited me to his house at Richmond. There were many things said worth *telling*, but not *writing* to you.—This has been a summer that I have spent more *socially* than any one these three years. I expect a good deal more company this week, the next, and the week after.—

Lady

Lady Luxborough talks of coming, and I believe will. The visit would bring my little walks into repute. When will the time come, that I shall enjoy your company here a month uninterrupted? Dear Sir,

Yours most faithfully,

W. SHENSTONE.

XLII. To the same, with a new Theory of Political Principles.

Dear Mr. Graves,

I HAVE lately received a letter from Mr. Whistler, which conveys your compliments to me; and, by so doing, prompts me to acknowledge the receipt of your last kind letter. I observe you adhere strictly to the apostolical precept of being "swift to hear, slow to speak;" the latter part of which, I would fain conclude, you understand too literally.

Your neighbour, I see, is not a little embarrassed with his mills at Whitchurch. I have long had an eye upon his advertisement in the London Evening Post, and been not a little scandalized thereat. What has the name of a poet to do with the publication of lands and tenements? or the idea of harmony with the noise of a water-mill? yet has

he

he extracted music from the subject, and mirth from his misfortunes; having sent me a ballad upon the miller, written with much ease and some drollery.

As to the light in which you place your present fortunes, I can only say, that you have not that situation I could wish you for your *own sake*: for so far as *I* am concerned in your elevation, I can assure you very faithfully, that no circumstances in the world could more endear you to my affection, or recommend you to my respect, than the present. My *affection*, you will easily observe, from the very *nature* of affection in general, would stand no chance to be increased by your promotion; and as for respect, if I knew the degree you desired, I would acquit myself of it to your satisfaction *now*; and were you settled at *Lambeth*, I should expect that you would require no *more* from me upon that account; at least in private: so that, so far as either *deference* or *friendship* is concerned, you are an Archbishop to me to all intents and purposes.—As to figure in the world, it depends much, I know, upon advancement; and yet even here you will be ever *sure* of that kind of weight which ingenuity gives; discernible to the *smaller* indeed, but undoubtedly the more *valuable* part of the world;—but this is improper, as it is *philosophy*, and as it is *advice*; neither of which is it suitable for me to suggest to you—“Alcineo Poma, &c.” As to the long series

of my lamentations, I will not now enter upon the reasonableness of them. It is a subject, to tell you the truth, on which you cannot reply without some danger of hurting me.—As for politics (you will blame this letter for dwelling so much upon the subject of yours); but as for politics, I think poets are *tories* by nature, supposing them to be by nature poets.—The love of an individual person or family, that has worn a crown for many successions, is an inclination greatly adapted to the fanciful tribe. On the other hand, mathematicians, abstract-reasoners, of no manner of attachment to persons, at least to the *visible* part of them, but prodigiously devoted to the ideas of virtue, liberty, interest, and so forth, are generally *whigs*. It happens agreeably enough to this maxim, that the whigs are friends to that wise, plodding, un-poetical people the Dutch—the *tories*, on the other hand, are taken mightily with that shewy, ostentatious nation the French. Fox-hunters, that reside amongst the beauties of nature, and bid defiance to art, in short, that have intellects of a poetical *turn*, are frequently *tories*—citizens, merchants, &c. that scarce see what nature is, and consequently have no pretensions to a poetical taste, are, I think, generally argumentative and whiggish;—but perhaps I carry this too far.—Something there is in it, however, you will see: not that I would apply what I here say to particular revolutions, &c. I would only advance something general and speculative,

lative. Nor would I approve or condemn by this any one set of people now existing. Nor would I have you pretend to fish out my party from any thing I have said; for I am of none.—The letter I sent you last was *occasional*, and when I see you I will tell you the occasion. I absolutely agree with you in every tittle of your political observations.—I am glad I do; for I know the poisonous nature of party: and though we are *neither* violent, yet I should fear it. My schemes are *doubtful* at present, but my face is set towards Bath.—I am confident of the service those waters would do me.—I hope you will exhilarate me with a letter soon.—I would fain have furnished out a letter to amuse you after so long a silence, but I find myself unable; even as unable as I am to express the regard with which I am

Yours,

The Leasowes,

April 6, 1746.

W. SHENSTONE.

XLIII. Continuation of the same.

Dear Mr. Graves,

The Leasowes,

May 11, 1746.

THOUGH I feel an irresistible propensity to write to you this very post, yet I cannot say that I am able to advance any thing tending either to your
own

own or my satisfaction.—What is worst of all is, I cannot fix the time of seeing you with so much precision as I would always endeavour where my pleasure is so much concerned—I will tell you the whole affair.—I have for a long season purposed to drink the Bath waters this spring; and *did* think of setting out in a week's time, when I received your letter, purposing to stay there a month; and from thence take a circuit which should indulge me in a sight of you, Mr. Whistler, and some few others, in my way home. The latter part of this scheme (though far the more agreeable to me) was rather doubtful and precarious; depending (as you express it) on the state of my finances after a month's continuance at Bath; which I considered, and *do* consider, as a very probable means of bettering my constitution.—Now I covet to see you so much, that I would bring nothing but health in competition.—What I wish is, that you could, with convenience, either *hasten* or *delay* your journey, that you might find me before mine, or after my return, though I should infinitely, and for many reasons, prefer the former. I long to talk with you particularly now. I have much to say in regard to our friend's amour, to which you alluded in your last. I request it as a favour of you, that you would conjure him, by the friendship I have ever born him, and by any esteem which he has ever professed for me, that he would do nothing very *material* in the affair till I

have talked it over, and given him my faithful sentiments, "*quod censet amicus.*"

I AM not willing the balance should turn entirely on the whig side: I would give it a greater equilibrium, if the following suggestion might effect it. Tories, I said, have great, and sometimes partial affections for the *person* of a king.—We will suppose that kings are alternately good and bad: their loyalty to the good one is commendable; their partiality to the bad one not to be vindicated. Whigs have *no* passion, *no* gratitude, towards the good prince: there they are wrong. They are severe upon the bad one, in which they are justifiable. I wish I had not begun these wholesale distinctions, this miserable specimen of my politics. I protest against all epistolary disputes. I am now embarrassed in one, on much such another score, which fills up all my letter; for I love the last word, like a scold or a child.—I thank you for your little anecdotes from time to time: you may depend upon it, that I have never heard any thing *before*; for I never *do* hear any thing.—I am one very thankful letter in debt to your neighbour Whistler. I have at present nothing but the *propensity* of a good correspondent; but I will write soon. In the mean time, if you see him, ask him if he goes to Bath or Bristol this season.—I beg you would write to me directly *when* you can come, and how I may regulate my motions

so as to be best assured of seeing you.—Pray do not neglect a post. I am

Yours most entirely,

W. S.

XLIV. To the same, on the Mixture of Pleasure and Pain.

The Leasowes,

Dear Mr. Graves,

June the last, 1747.

IT is now, I believe, near half a year since I had the favour of a letter from you. When I wrote last, I discovered a more than ordinary solicitude for *one* immediate answer. It puzzles me to account for your unusual silence, otherwise than upon supposition of some offence you have taken : and it puzzles me as much to guess by what behaviour of mine I have been so unhappy as to give you that offence.

I AM vain enough to imagine that the little merit I have, deserves somewhat more regard than I have met with from the world. Be that as it will, the disappointment I must undergo, by any *appearance* of neglect from the friends I value, would more effectually dispirit me than any other whatsoever.

I HAVE published my design of visiting you, and Mr. Whistler in Oxfordshire, to all the world. A thousand incidents have hitherto interfered with it, which I will not now recount. But when I look back upon the regular succession of them, it looks as if Destiny had some hand in detaining me. The most *vigorous* of my *hopes* dwell upon seeing you next winter, though I am not a little indulgent to *those* that tell me I may see you long before.

I HAVE brought my place here to greater perfection than it has ever yet appeared in; and, with the *mob*, it is in some vogue. Nevertheless, I do not know that I ever relished it less in my life than I have done this summer. Bad health, bad spirits, no company to my mind, and no correspondences, are enough to blast the sweetest shades, and to poison the purest fountains. Some of these misfortunes I can impute to my own misconduct, and it embitters them. The two last I can less account for, having at all times done all I was able to recommend myself to my *friends*, behaving at the same time with courtesy to the rest of the world. The fact is not true; otherwise I might resolve it into this, that I alone am idle, and all the world is *busy*.

I FANCY you will imagine I lay too much stress upon Mr. Thomson's visit, when I mention the following inscription upon a seat in Virgil's grove:

"CELEB'MO

"CELEB' MO POETAE
 "IACOBO THOMSON, S.
 "PROPE FONTES ILLI NON FASTIDITOS
 "SED EM HANG ORNAVIT.
 "Quæ tibi, quæ tali reddam pro carmine dona?
 "Nam neque me tantum *venientis* *sibilus Aufri,
 "Nec percussa juvant fluctu tam litora, nec quæ
 "Saxofas inter decurrunt flumina valles."

VIRG.

I want your opinion of it, and whether it were not better thus,

"THOMSON,
 "QUI CVM QVICQVID VBIQVE RVVIS EST
 "AVT AMOENVM AVT VARIVM
 "MIRE DEPINKERAT,
 "HOS ETIAM FONTES NON FASTIDIVIT,"

But you will discover at first glance an impropriety in both. -- Now I am upon inscriptions, I send you one from a coin dug up very near me a few weeks ago:

Round the head,

"IMP V AVG GER DAC M"

On the reverse,

"S P Q R OPTIMO PRINCIPI COS VI"
 *The verse whispers here.

I 3

Within

Within which is an human figure fitting, with one hand reclined upon a wand; the other, as I take it, holding forth an olive.—I have given my opinion, it is one of Trajan's; and my virtuoso character will rest upon the truth of it. It is a silver coin, but very obscure. There appears a large mass of ruins, rough stone, very strongly cemented, where they found it.—If you were here, it might amuse you.

HEAVINESS may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.—I have so settled a notion of the proportionate mixture of pleasure and pain in this life, that I expect one to succeed the other as naturally as day and night. I own, this is owing to the soul as much as to outward incidents. Sorrow prepares it for mirth, and *vice versa*.—The durations of both differ.—Last summer I spent agreeably; this quite otherwise.—To-day I have been quite melancholy; I expect happiness to-morrow, from either an aptitude of mind, or some incident sufficient to overcome its inaptitude.—Perhaps that incident may be a letter from you; I wish it may, and am most truly

Yours,

W. S.

I had a coin of Vespasian given me to-day, and I begin a collection: if you have any duplicates, you

you will please to oblige me.—I want to correct my elegies, by your assistance.—I will begin no more.

XLV. To the same, with Thoughts on Advice.

The Leasowes,

Sept. 21, 1747.

Dear Mr. Graves,

I AM under some apprehension that you dread the sight of a letter from me, as it seems to lay claim to the compliment of an answer. I will therefore write you one that shall waive its privilege, at least till such time as your leisure encourages, or your present dissipation does not forbid, you to send one.—I dare now no longer expatiate upon the affair you have in hand; it is enough for me if you will excuse the freedom I *have* taken. I have often known *delay* produce good effects in some cases which even sagacity itself could not surmount; and, if I thought I did not go too far, would presume to recommend it now. You know I have very little of the temper of an alderman. I almost hate the *idea* of wealthiness as much as the *word*. It seems to me to carry a notion of fulness, stagnation, and insignificancy. It is this disposition of mine that can *alone* give any weight to the advice I send you, as it proves me not to give it through any partiality to fortune. As to what remains, you are, I hope, assured of the value I must ever have for you in *any*

circumstances, and the regard I shall always shew for any that belongs to you. I cannot like you *less* or *more*.—I now drop into other matters. Bergen, I see, is taken at last; pray what are the sentiments of your political companions? I dined some time ago with Mr. Lyttelton and Mr. Pitt, who both agreed it was worth twenty thousand men to the French; which is a light in which I never used to consider it. Any little intimation that you please to *confer* upon me, enables me to seem *wise* in this country for a month; particularly if I take care to adjust my face accordingly.—As I was returning last Sunday from church, whom should I meet in my way, but that *sweet-souled* bard Mr. James Thomson, in a chaise drawn by two horses lengthways.—I welcomed him into the country, and asked him to accompany Mr. Lyttelton to The Leasowes (who had offered me a visit), which he promised to do. So I am in daily expectations of them and all the world this week. I fancy they will lavish all their praises upon *nature*, reserving none for poor *art* and *me*. But if I ever live, and am able to perfect my schemes, I shall not despair of pleasing the few I first began with, *the few friends prejudiced in my favour*; and then “Fico por los malignatores.” Censures will not affect me; for I am armed so strong in *vanity*, that they will pass by me as the idle wind which I regard not.—I think it pretty near equal, in a country place, whether you gain the small number

ber

ber of tasters, or the *large crowd* of the vulgar. The latter are more frequently met with, and *gaps, stupent, and stars* much more. But one would chuse to please a few *friends* of taste before mob or gentry, the great vulgar or the small; because therein one gratifies both one's social passions and one's pride, that is, one's *self-love*. Above all things, I would wish to please *you*; and if I have a wish that projects or is prominent beyond the rest, it is to see you placed to your satisfaction near me; but Fortune must vary from her usual treatment before she favours me so far.—And yet there *was* a time, when one might probably have prevailed on her. I knew not what to do.—The affair was so intricately circumstanced—your surprizing silence after the hint I gave.—Mr. D.—offering to serve any friend of mine; nay, pressing me to use the opportunity.—His other relations, his guardians, teizing him with sure symptoms of a rupture in case of a refusal on *their* side.—Mr. P.—soliciting me if the place were *sold*, which it could not legally be. Friendship, propriety, impartiality, self-interest (which I *little* regarded), endeavouring to distract me; I think I never spent so disagreeable an half-year since I was born. To close the whole, I could not *foresee* the event, which is almost foretold in your last letter, and I knew I could not serve you; but I must render it a *necessary* one. In short, when I can tell you the whole affair at leisure, you will own it to be of such

a nature, that I must be ever in suspense concerning my behaviour, and of course shall never reflect on it with pleasure. Believe me, with the truest affection,

Yours,

W. SHENSTONE.

XLVI. To a Friend, from The Leasowes.

Dear Sir,

1747.

IT is not much above two hours since I received your obliging letter, and I am already set down to answer it.—To speak the truth, I had almost given you over: I imagined you had taken umbrage at some expression or circumstance in my epistle, and were determined to make me sensible you did so by your silence. I hope, this error of mine will serve to establish one rule on *both* sides.—It is what ought, I am sure, always to take place, where people wish a perpetuity of friendship. I mean, never, upon circumstances of disrespect, to admit of circumstantial evidence.

I AM very grave, so you may depend on the sincerity of all I shall say. I saw several beauties in your former elegy; but, though it was “*formosa*,” it did not appear to me “*ipsa forma*.” I like this that you have

have now sent *very* much. It has a simplicity which your last a little wanted, and has thought *enough*. I begin to be seldom pleased with the compositions of others, or my own; but I could be really *fond* of this, with a few alterations that I could propose:—but you must know, at the same time, that these are such as no one would approve beside myself.—I know it.—However, there are some seeming *faults* in it.

I HAVE been greatly mortified in my correspondents of late.—I even said in my haste, All friends are faithless.—G—, after a month's expectation, which he had confirmed to me, of seeing him here, let me know about a fortnight since, that I had more leisure than him; and, since it did not suit his convenience to come, I ought to take the opportunity of visiting him, and seeing Derbyshire while he continues in it.—W— has not wrote to me these six weeks.—Outing has been, moreover, dumb for the same space of time; and I purpose in my heart to behave with some distance towards both, for this neglect (see my rule of circumstantial evidence).

It is pity you cannot spare a day or two to come and see me. My wood grows excessively pleasant, and its pleasantness vexes me; because nobody will come that can taste it.

Your

Your health, according to your description, is much the same with mine; but, from the gaiety of your style and *designs*, I collect that it is greatly better.

I HAVE an alcove, six elegies, a seat, two epitaphs (one upon myself), three ballads, four songs, and a serpentine river, to shew you when you come. Will the compositions come safe to you, if I send my book, which contains the *only* copies of several things (which I could not remember if they were lost)?—but I will not send them. If my horse gets well, I may essay a visit for two days, and bring them with me, that I may make comments while you read them, as becometh a genuine author to do.

I AM raising a green-house from the excrescences of Lord Dudley's; but I do not find that "*vient l'ap-
petit en-mangeant*," that I grow fonder of my collection proportionably as it increases.

I SHOULD think myself fortunate enough at present, if, like you, I could only find that I had been mentioned for a vacant post; but I have withdrawn all my views from court-preferment, and fixed them on finding a pot of money, which I determine to be the far more probable scheme.

I HAVE

I HAVE little health and frequent mortification, so that no one need envy me; and yet, I believe, there are that do. Is any enviable but such as are unambitious? I never shall be able to reckon myself of that tribe, which have engrossed all *happiness* to themselves, and left the rest of the world nothing but hopes and possessions. Yet I do not much feel the pains of ambition while I am conversing with ingenious friends of my own level: but in *other* company it hurts me. Let me advise you, now I think of it, to dread the company of silly people, out-of-the-way people, and, in one word, what men of genius call *the vulgar*. You run ten times the risque of being mortified, voluntarily or unknowingly, amongst the latter of these, to what you do amongst men of sense and politeness, be they ever so malicious;—but my paper is filled.

Do write soon.

XLVII. To the same.

It is somewhere about the
20th of Sept. 1747; and

I write from The Leasowes.

Dear Sir,

I THINK I have lived to out-correspond almost all my correspondents; whether you are the last that is to be subdued, I will not say; the rest are so fatigued,

fatigued, that they are not able to atchieve a line, Apprized of this, and being by nature disposed to have mercy on the vanquished, "*parcere subjectis*," I seldom write a syllable more than is requisite to further some scheme, or ascertain some interview, the latter of these being the purpose of *this* mine epistle. I am in great hopes I shall be at liberty to see you ere many weeks be past; and would beg of you, in the mean time, to inform me, by a letter, when I am likely, or when very *unlikely*, to meet with you at home. I am detained, just at present, by continual expectations of the Hagley family.

As I was returning from church on Sunday last, whom should I meet, in a chaise, with two horses length-ways, but that right friendly bard, Mr. Thomson? I complimented him upon his arrival in this country, and asked him to accompany Mr. Lyttelton to The Leasowes, which he said he would with abundance of pleasure; and so we parted. You will observe, that the more stress I lay upon this visit, and the more I *discover* to you, the more substantial is my apology for deferring mine into Warwickshire. I own, I am pleased with the prospect of shewing them something at The Leasowes beyond what they expect. I have begun my terras on the high hill I shewed you, made some considerable improvements in Virgil's grove, and finished a walk from it to the house, after a manner which you will approve.

They

They are going to build a castle in the park round the lodge, which, if well executed, must have a good effect; and they are going likewise to build a rotund to terminate the vista. The fault is, that they anticipate every thing which I propose to do when I become *rich*; but as that is never likely to be, perhaps it is not of any importance;—but what I term *rich*, implies no great deal; I believe you are a witness to the moderation of my desires; and I flatter myself that you will believe your friend in *that* respect something above the vulgar:

“Crede non illum tibi de scelestâ

“Plebe dilectum, neque sic fidelem,

“Sic lucro aversum, potuisse nasci

“Patre pudendo.”

If I come to your house, positively I will not go to see Mr. M—. He has been twice as near me as The Grange, with C—L—, and never deemed my place worth seeing. I doubt, you are a little too modest in praising it wherever you go.—Why don't you applaud it with both hands, “*utroque pollice*?”—“*Parcentes ego dexterâs odi, sparge rosas.*”—I am so very *partial* to my native place, that it seems a miracle to me that it is not more famous. But I complain unjustly of you; for, as you have always contributed to my happiness, you have taken every opportunity to contribute to my figure.

I wish I could say the same of some who have it
more in their power.

I HAVE yet about a thousand things to say to you—not now, though.—Lady L—h's visit I reserve till I see you. A coach with a coronet is a pretty kind of phenomenon at my door—few prettier, except the face of such a friend as you; for I do not want the grace to prefer a generous and spirited friendship to all the gewgaws that ambition can *contrive*. I have wrote out my elegies, and heartily wish you had them to look over before I come.—I know not how to send them,—I shall bring and leave some poetry with you.—“Thus & odores!” or rather a proper covering for “Thus & odores, & “piper, & quicquid chartis amicitur ineptis!”

Adieu! dear Sir.

Believe me ever yours,

W. SHENSTONE.

XLVIII. To the same, with a Song.

Dear Sir,

1747.

BEING just returned from a small excursion, it was with the utmost pleasure that I read over your letter; and, though it abounds both in wit and
and

and waggery, I sit down incontinently to answer it with *none*.

THE agreeableness of your letters is now heightened by the surprize they give me. I must own, I have thought you in a manner lost to the amusements in which you once delighted, correspondences, works of taste and fancy, &c. If you think the opinion worth removing, you need only favour me with such a letter now and then, and I will place you (in my imagination) where you shall see all the favourites of fortune cringing at your feet.

I THINK I could add about half a dozen hints to your observations on electricity, which might at least disguise the facts; and then why will you not put it into some news-paper, or monthly pamphlet? you might discover yourself to whom you have a mind. It would give more than ordinary pleasure at this time.—Some other will take the hint.—Pity your piece should not have the advantage of novelty as well as of wit!

I DINED and stayed a night with Dr. E—; he was extremely obliging, and I am glad of such a friend to visit at B. He asked much after you.—He shewed me his Ovid—I advised him to finish some one epistle *highly*, that he might shew it.—

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The

The whole will *not take*, though it goes against me to tell him so. I should be glad he could succeed at B.; and could I serve him, it would be with a safe conscience; for I take him to excel the rest of B. physicians far in point of speculation and diligence, &c.

I SEND you the song you asked for, and request of you to write me out your new edition of the election verses; and, at your *leisure*, a copy of the poem which we altered.

THE LARK.

"Go, tuneful bird, that gladd'st the skies,

"To Daphne's window speed thy way,

"And there on quiv'ring pinions rise,

"And there thy vocal art display.

"And if she deign thy notes to hear,

"And if she praise thy matin song,

"Tell her, the sounds that sooth her ear,

"To simple British birds belong.

"Tell her, in livelier plumes array'd,

"The bird from Indian groves may shine;

"But ask the lovely, partial maid,

"What are his notes compar'd to thine?

"Then

"Then bid her treat that wileless Beau

"And all his motley race with scorn ;

"And heal deserving Damon's woe,

"Who sings her praise, and sings forlorn."

I am, Sir,

Your most faithful friend and servant,

W. SHENSTONE.

HAVE you read Watson, Martyn, and Freke, on electricity ? I accidentally met with the two former, by which my head is rendered almost giddy—electrics, non-electrics, electrics *per se*, and bodies that are only conductors of electricity, have a plaguy bad effect on so vortical a brain as mine.

I WILL infallibly spend a week with you, perhaps about February, if it suits you ; though I think too it must be later.

I HAVE been painting in water colours, during a visit I made, flowers. I would recommend the amusement to you, if you can allow it the time that is expedient.

I TRUST you will give me one entire week in the spring, when my late alterations may exhibit themselves to advantage.

XLIX. To the same, after a Visit.

Sunday,

Feb. 14, 1747-8.

Dear Mr. Jago,

I AM tempted once more to apologize for the unseasonable visit I paid you, though I feel myself entirely innocent in that respect, even as much so as the post-boy was guilty; for had my previous letter arrived in due time, you had then been furnished with an opportunity of waving my company till a more convenient season. I was *only*, or, at least, *chiefly* uneasy upon *your* account. I spent my time very agreeably, and only less so than I might, had I not been conscious to myself that I was intruding upon domestic tenderneſſes.

I SPENT the Sunday night and the next day at Mr. Wren's; and am now just returned from Mr. Dolman's, who has made me a genteel present of Spence's Polymetis. I have not yet *read* many dialogues in it, but I have *dipped* in several; and have reason to be well enough satisfied with the simple and uninvincible manner in which he has introduced Mr. Lowth's poem. I have long known of this intended *introduction* (which I accidentally found to have been settled betwixt them before I published *mine* on the same subject), and a little dreaded the *form* of it. I have long ago made considerable improvements

provements in mine, and have a mind one day to publish it once more; after which, let it sleep in peace. I have sometimes thought of printing my next title-page thus, viz. "Poems; consisting of Songs, Odes, and Elegies; with an improved edition of The Judgement of Hercules, and of The School-mistress." But I have but very few critical acquaintance, and I live at a great distance from those I have; stationed amongst the *makers* and the *wearers* of hobnails;

"Far from the joys that with my soul agree,

"From *wit*, from *learning*—very far from thee."

PARNELL.

I know I have thrown a great number of careless things into your hands. I know to *whom* I intrusted my follies; but I know *not* what they *are*:—I believe, in general, that they consist of mis-begotten embryos and abortive births, which it had been merely decent to have buried in—some part of my garden;—but I was morally assured that you would expose nothing of mine to my disadvantage. As to some that are *less imperfect*, you promised your observations, and I desire you would make them with the utmost freedom. I can bear any censure which you shall pass by way of letter, and I beg once more that you would not be sparing. It will be esteemed as great a favour as you can do me. When they have gone through your hands, and those of one

or two more friends, I shall, perhaps, think of publishing them; though as to that, much depends upon the advice I receive, and previously on the opportunity I have of receiving it. I am in hopes that you will be pretty full in discovering to me, *which you dislike the least, what faults you find, and what improvements they are capable of.* I set you a tedious task; but I will return the favour as far as I am able, either in *the same way* or any other. This brings me to say, that, if there be any compositions of yours that you would have me correct (and there are several of which I want a copy), I would beg you to send them. Your Blackbird excels any singing-bird I ever heard; and I beseech you to convey it to The Leasowes by the next opportunity, that he may acquire fame near other rills, and in other valleys, than those in which he was produced.

I HAVE many compliments to make in your country; to Mr. H—, Mrs. N—, Mrs. J—, Mr. F—, Mr. T—, and your brother. If I go over to Mr. W—'s, I will assuredly call and spend a night with you.—*That* is precarious.—But whether I do or not, I would willingly hope to see you this spring and summer more than once; as a *critic* and as a *friend*: nor do I forget the promise of Mr. H— and Mr. F—;—but of these things more when I send for the papers, which I purpose to do to-morrow fortnight, that is, the twenty-ninth of February.

I HAVE

I HAVE suffered greatly by railing at the black button on a parson's great coat. Had Mr. Hall's been thus distinguished, he could not have mistaken mine for his own; which latter I sent in order to be commuted at Birmingham, and was almost starved to death before I could accomplish the exchange. There is no trifling with any *part* of orthodoxy with impunity.—That is the moral.

I HAVE received a very obliging letter from Lady Luxborough, wherein she tells me that Lady Hartford admires my place in her description. Mr. Thomson is intimate at Lady Hartford's; and I suppose Lady Hartford may have been informed by Lady L. that Mr. Thomson has been here; so I conclude, in mere vanity, that my farm is advancing in reputation.

WHAT think you of Mr. Carte's History? or what of his narrative concerning the Pretender's touching for the King's evil! I think one is not, however, to give up his book entirely; because, with *all his superstition*, he may have several anecdotes that one would like to read.

I HAVE had great expectations from the beautiful veins of a piece of oak of which I have had a table made; but, upon a thorough survey of it, it is so

like nothing in the world as old B—'s callimanco night-gown.

I HAVE nothing to add worth beginning upon another page ; but I happened not to make a regular conclusion in my preceding one.

You must give me some time to colour you a collection of flowers (that octavo edition I shewed you here) ; and then I will make Mrs. Jago a present of it. I believe I can engage Mr. Dolman to assist me, who is much my superior in point of accuracy ; and the inscription at the beginning is to run somehow thus :

“ ELEGANTISSIMAE PVELLAE

“ DOROTHEAE FANCOVRT,

“ QVAE PERDILECTI SVI CONDISCIPVLI

“ RICHARDI IAGO

“ AMORES MERVIT,

“ D. D.

“ GVLIELMVS SHENSTONE ;

“ DEBITAE NYMPHIS OPIFEX CORONAE.”

That is, by trade a garland-maker ; but this inscription I may alter, if I can think of any thing more expressive of the regard which I have ever born and still bear you.

LORD

LORD Dudley is gone, and franks are no more. I have nothing to wish you but health and preferment;—"det vitam, det opes;—" with these you will easily compound that cordial *happiness*, having every other ingredient that is requisite at hand.

I am, most affectionately,

Your very faithful friend, &c.

W. SHENSTONE.

L. To Mr. JAGO.

Dear Sir,

The Leaflowes,
Mar. 23, 1747-8.

I HAVE sent Tom over for the papers which I left under your inspection: having nothing to add upon this head, but that the more *freely* and *particularly* you give me your opinion, the greater will be the obligation which I shall have to acknowledge.

I SHALL be very glad, if I happen to receive a good large bundle of your own compositions; in regard to which, I will observe any commands which you shall please to lay upon me.

I AM

I AM favoured with a certain correspondence, by way of letter, which I told you I should be glad to cultivate ; and I find it very entertaining.

PRAY did you receive my answer to your last letter, sent by way of London ? I should be extremely sorry to be debarred the pleasure of writing to you by the post, as often as I feel a violent propensity to describe the notable incidents of my life ; which amount to about as much as the tinsel of your little boy's hobby-horse.

I AM on the point of purchasing a couple of busts for the niches in my hall ; and believe me, my good friend, I never proceed one step in ornamenting my little farm, but I enjoy the hopes of rendering it more agreeable to you, and the small circle of acquaintance which sometimes favour me with their company.

I SHALL be extremely glad to see you and Mr. Fancourt when the trees are green ; that is, in May ; but I would not have you content yourself with a single visit this summer. If Mr. Hardy (to whom you will make my compliments) inclines to favour me so far, you must calculate so as to wait on him whenever he finds it convenient ; though I have better hopes of making his reception here agreeable
to

to him when my Lord Dudley comes down.—I wonder how he would like the scheme I am upon, of exchanging a large tankard for a silver standish.

I HAVE had a couple of paintings given me since you were here. One of them is a Madona, valued, as it is said, at ten guineas in Italy, but which you would hardly purchase at the price of five shillings. However, I am endeavouring to make it out to be one of Carlo Maratt's, who was a first hand, and famous for Madonas; even so as to be nick-named "Cartuccio delle Madonne" by Salvator Rosa. Two letters of the cypher (CM) agree; what shall I do with regard to the third? It is a small piece, and sadly blackened. It is about the size (though not quite the shape) of the Bacchus over the parlour door, and has much such a frame.

A PERSON may amuse himself almost as cheaply as he pleases. I find no small delight in rearing all sorts of poultry; geese, turkeys, pullets, ducks, &c. I am also somewhat smitten with a blackbird which I have purchased: a very fine one; brother by father, but not by mother, to the unfortunate bird you so beautifully describe, a copy of which description you must not fail to send me;—but, as I said before, one may easily habituate one's self to cheap amusements; that is, *rural* ones (for all town amusements are horridly expensive);—I would have
you

you cultivate your garden ; plant flowers, have a bird or two in the hall (they will at *least* amuse your children) ; write now and then a song ; buy now and then a book ; write now and then a letter to

Your most sincere friend,

and affectionate servant,

W. SHENSTONE.

P. S. I HOPE you have exhausted all your spirit of criticism upon my verses, that you may have none left to cavil at this letter ; for I am ashamed to think, that *you*, in particular, should receive the dullest I ever wrote in my life. Make my compliments to Mrs. Jago.—She can go a little abroad, you say.—Tell her, I should be proud to shew her *The Leafowes*. Adieu !

LI. To Mr. —, on his Marriage.

This was written August
21, 1748 ; but not sent
till the 28th.

Dear Sir,

HOW little soever I am inclined to write at this time, I cannot bear that you should censure me of unkindness in seeming to overlook the late change in your situation. It will, I *hope*, be esteemed
superfluous

superfluous in *me* to send you my most cordial wishes that you may be happy; but it will, perhaps, be *something* more significant to say, that I believe you *will*: building my opinion on the knowledge I have long had of your own temper, and the account you give me of the person's whom you have made choice of, to whom I desire you to pay my sincere and most affectionate compliments.

I SHALL always be glad to find you *presentibus æquum*, though I should always be pleased when I saw you *tentantem majora*. I think you should neglect no opportunity at this time of life to push your fortune so far as an *elegant* competency, that you be not embarrassed with those kind of solitudes towards the evening of your day;

“Ne te semper inops agitet vexetque cupido,

“Ne pavor, & rerum *mediocriter* utilium spes!”

I would have you acquire, if possible, what the world calls, with some *propriety*, an *easy* fortune; and what I interpret, such a fortune as allows of some inaccuracy and inattention, that one may not be continually in suspense about the laying out a *shilling*;—this kind of advice may seem extremely dogmatical in *me*; but, if it carries any haughty air, I will obviate it by owning that I never *acted* as I say. I have lost *my* road to happiness, I confess; and, instead of pursuing the way to the fine lawns and venerable oaks which distinguish the region of it,

I am

I am got into the pitiful *parterre-garden* of amusement, and view the nobler scenes at a distance. I think I can see the road too that leads the better way, and can shew it others; but I have many miles to measure back before I can get into it myself, and no kind of resolution to take a single step. My chief amusements at present are the same they have long been, and lie scattered about my farm. The French have what they call a *parque ornée*; I suppose, approaching about as near to a garden as the park at Hagley. I give my place the title of a *ferme ornée*; though, if I had money, I should hardly confine myself to such decorations as that name requires. I have made great improvements; and the consequence is, that I long to have you see them.

I HAVE not heard whether Miss ——'s match proceeded.—I suppose your objections were grounded on the person's *age* and *temper*; and that they had the less weight, as they supposed you acted indiscreetly yourself: I can say but little on the occasion. You know —— better than I do. Only this I must add, that I have so great an esteem for your sister, that it will be necessary to my *ease*, that whoever marries her she should be happy.

I HAVE little hopes that I shall now see often in this country; though it would be *you*, in all probability,

bability, as soon as *any*, that would take a journey of fifty miles,

“To see the *poorest* of the sons of men.”

The truth is, my affairs are miserably embroiled, by my own negligence, and the non-payment of tenants. I believe, I shall be forced to seize on one next week for three years and a half's rent, due last Lady-day; an affair to which I am greatly averse, both through *indolence* and *compassion*. I hope, however, I shall be always able (as I am sure I shall be desirous) to entertain a friend of a *philosophical regimen*, such as you and Mr. Whittler; and that will be all I can do.

HAGLEY park is considerably improved since you were here, and they have built a castle by way of ruin on the highest part of it, which is *just* seen from my *wood*; but by the removal of a tree or two (growing in a wood that joins to the park, and which, fortunately enough, belongs to Mr. Dolman and me), I believe it may be rendered a considerable object here.

I PURPOSE to write to Mr. Whittler either this post or the next. The fears you seemed in upon my account are very kind, but have no grounds. I am, dear Mr. —, habitually and sincerely,

Your most affectionate

W. SHENSTONE.

Mr

My humble service to your neighbours.—Smith (whom you knew at Derby) will publish a print of my grove in a small collection.

LII. To Mr. JAGO, with an Invitation to The
Leasowes.

Sept. 3, Saturday night,

Dear Mr. Jago,

1748.

I HARDLY know whether it will be prudent in me to own, that I wrote you a *long letter* upon the receipt of your last, which I now have upon my table. I condemn this habit in *myself* entirely, and should, I am sure, be very unhappy, if my friends, by my example, should be induced to contract the same. The truth is, I had not expell'd myself in it to my mind, and it was full of blots, and blunders, and interlinings; yet, such as it was, it had wearied my attention, and given me a disinclination to begin it afresh. I am now impatient to remove any scruple you may have concerning my grateful sense of all your favours, and the invariable continuance of my affection and esteem.—I find by your last obliging letter, that my machinations and devices are not entirely private.—You knew of my draught of Hagley Castle about the bigness of a barley-corn; you knew of our intended visit to

Lady

Lady Luxborough's ; and I must add, Mr. Thomas Hall knew of my contrivance for the embellishment of Mr. Hardy's house. Nothing is there hid that shall not be revealed.—Our visit to Barrels is now over and past.—Lady Luxborough has seen Hagley Castle in the original :—and as to my desire that my draught might be shewn to no *Christian* soul, you surely did but ill comply with it, when you shewed that *drawing* to a *Clergyman*. However, you may have acted up to my *real* meaning, if you have taken care not to shew it to any connoisseur. I meant chiefly to guard against any one that knows the rules, in whose eyes, I am sure, it could not turn to my credit.—Pray how do you like the festoons dangling over the oval windows ?—It is the chief advantage in repairing an old house, that one may deviate from the rules without any extraordinary censure.

I WILL not trouble you *now* with many particulars. The intent of Tom's coming is, to desire your company and Mrs. Jago's this week.—I should be extremely glad if your convenience would allow you to come on Monday or Tuesday ; but, if it is *entirely* impracticable, I would beseech you not to put off the visit longer than the Monday following, for the leaves of my groves begin to fall a great pace.—I beg once more, you would let no small inconvenience prevent your being here on Monday.—As

to my visit at Icheneton, you may depend upon it soon after; and I hope you will not stand upon punctilio, when I mention my inclination that you may all take a walk through my coppices before their beauty is much impaired. Were I in a sprightly vein, I would aim at saying something genteel by way of answer to Mrs. Jago's compliment.—As it is, I can only thank her for the *substance*, and applaud the *politeness* of it.—I postpone all other matters till I see you. I am, habitually and sincerely, ever yours

Your most affectionate friend,

W. SHENSTONE.

I beg my compliments to Mr. Hardy.

P. S. I am not accustomed, my dear friend, to send you a *blank* page; nor can I be content to do so now.

I thank you very *sensibly* for the verses with which you honour me. I think them good lines, and so do others that have seen them; but you will give me leave, when I see you, to propose some little alteration. As to an epistle, it would be executed with *difficulty*, and I would have it turn to your credit as well as my own. But you have certainly of late acquired an *ease* in writing; and I am tempted to think, that what you write henceforth

forth will be universally good. Persons that have seen your elegies like "The Blackbirds" best, as it is most assuredly the most ~~rich~~ but I, who pretend to great penetration, can foresee that "The Linnet" will be made to excel. — More of this when I see you. — Your Mistr. C. — J. — R. — says, is married; and poor Mr. Thomson, Mr. Pitt tells me, is dead. — He was to have been at Hagley this week, had he. I should probably have seen him here. — As it is, I will erect an urn in Virgil's Grove to his memory. — I was really as much shocked to hear of his death, as if I had known and loved him for a number of years. — God knows, I lean on a very few friends; and if they drop me, I become a wretched misanthrope.

I have a view to your credit as well as my own. I think it necessary to inscribe such a

LIII. To the same.

Sunday night,
Dear Mr. Jago, on the 11th Sept. 1748.

I TAKE this opportunity of acknowledging the justice of your excuses. Mrs. Jago's present circumstances render her visit quite impracticable, and yours I have the same kind of reason to dispense with; as I guess, that she could as soon take a journey herself at this time, as bear that you should.

—But to say I was not greatly mortified, would be

doing myself the greatest injustice. *Disappointed* I was, you may be sure, to hear excuses; even as much as Sir John Falstaff, when Mr. Dombledon put him in mind of *security*, instead of sending him *two and thirty yards* of sattin to make him a *short* cloak. And on the whole, I began to accuse you and Mrs. Jago of *colloguing* together, to fix your visit at a time when you were well assured you should have an *apology* to send me instead. Now, if I should press this accusation, pray how would you evade the force of it?—The next thing I am to speak to, is your verses. I have made you my acknowledgments *before*; and as you are so good as to accept them, I will not trouble you with additional professions, or repetitions of the past. I will depend upon your good-sense for an excuse, if I only add what I think proper as to any *alteration*; wherein I have a view to *your* credit, as well as my *own*. I confess, it requires some nicety to inscribe such an elegy as “The Gold-finches” without the danger you foresaw. But I think it *may* be done (and *is* pretty nearly) in such manner that no man of *taste* will be tempted to ridicule it; and as for the vulgar, of whatever *rank* they be, it is absolutely necessary many times to *give them up*. *Taste* and *tenderness* are absolutely connected; and you may very readily call to mind some charming things, that must excite the laughter of your men of *fire* and *banter*, but are by no means thought the worse of by men of *true* *genius*.

genius. I will only mention Andrew Marvel's *Fawn* in Dryden's *Miscellanies*. I inclose the elegy with some few proposed alterations, so I will not risque the *filling* my letter with criticism. I also inclose the other verses you sent me, which I think good ones, and to stand in need of little alteration, beside that of the inglorious name at the head of them; to which, notwithstanding, I will never submit. Pray who is the young gentleman that translates your elegy into Latin?—The new dress will give you some amusement; and, if these lines *be* the product of the genius of a boy of that age, he will in a year's time be able to extend the fame of your compositions. I shall then be glad to see "The Gold-finches" under his hand; though I have no extraordinary fondness for the Latin poetry of a modern; at least, till your eldest son begins to translate our madrigals.

I HAVE not yet seen Mr. Thomson's "Castle of Indolence."—I waited for a smaller edition; but am now too impatient not to send for it on Thursday next.—I am fully bent on raising a neat urn to him in my lower grove, if Mr. Lyttelton does not inscribe one at Hagley *before* me. But I should be extremely glad of your advice whereabouts to place it.—You speak of my dwelling in the Castle of Indolence, and I verily believe I *do*. There is something like enchantment in my present inactivity; for, without

any kind of lett or impediment to the correction of my trifles that I see, I am in no wise able to make the least advances. I think within myself I could proceed if you were here; and yet I have reason to believe, if you ~~were~~ here, we should only ramble round the groves, and chat away the time; and perhaps *that*, upon the *whole*, is of full as much importance.—I do not know but I do myself some little injustice here, for I *have* wrote out my *levities* and my *sonnets*, good and bad, with many ornaments from the pencil; and the next thing I do will be to transcribe my elegies. The fault is, I take no pains to *improve* what I transcribe, and consequently am only able to exhibit my nonsense in a fairer dress.—You must give me leave, ere it be long, to insert two or three lines (I think in *verse*) before Mrs. Jago's flower-piece.—I am sure, I am obliged to her for a fruit I greatly love—it was not entirely ripe; but it was the only one I have tasted since I was last in London.—Yesterday dined here Lady Luxborough, Mr. Outing and Mr. Hall, Lord Dudley, Miss Lea, Counsellor Corbet and Mr. Saunders, Mr. Perry Mrs. Perry and Miss Dolman, and half a dozen footmen, beside my own servants and labourers; so you may guess we had no small fracas. I now sit down amid solitude and silence, and can hear little else beside the pendulum of my clock;—yet my spirits are no way sunk, but afford me just such a temperature of mind as inclines me to write to some familiar friend :

friend: albeit I have a thousand things to *talk* of to you, which I do not care to *write*. I hope to be able to spend a few days with Mr. Hardy, before his melons are all gone; and yet I would not have him keep one a *moment* longer upon *my* account. I desire he would accept of my compliments, as I trust he will.—Franks at present run low with me; but I send you *one*, which you cannot use so soon but I shall be able to send you others immediately. I wish I could send you any thing more than the means of obliging,

Sir,

Your most affectionate friend,

W. S.

LIV. To the same.

Dear Sir,

Sunday, Nov. 13.

I MUST fairly own, that I have not sat down till now to return my acknowledgments for your last most obliging favour; and yet I have been doing so in *imagination* almost every day since I received it. I have only to desire that you would not think me *stupid*; and then you must of course conclude me highly delighted, to find the verses which had

so greatly pleased me, made so *particularly interesting* to me. In testimony hereof, I have caused these my letters to be made *patent*, &c. Furthermore, I am glad to see you dissent from some alterations I proposed; for which, generally speaking, I think I can see your reasons. As to any little matter which I have to mention farther, I chuse to defer it till I wait on Mr. Hardy; which I purpose to do before this month is out. It may possibly *happen* the beginning of the next week; but I dare not lay such stress upon a future *event*, as to give you a commission to say so much to *him*. Instead thereof, please to make him my compliments, and tell him I talk of coming *very soon*.

I BORROWED Doddsley's Miscellany of Lady Luxborough, in which are many good things. I long to be making a mark on the head of every copy (as I would do were the books my *own*). Here a cypher; there an asterism of five points, and there one of eight.—If you, and Mr. W—, and Mr. G—, and I, were together for a fortnight, to correct and revise, might not we make a miscellany of *originals* that would sell?—My fingers itch to be at it;—but I fear it cannot be.—Thomson's poem amused me greatly.—I think his plan has faults; particularly, that he should have said nothing of the diseases attending laziness in his *first* canto, but reserved them to strike us *more affectingly* in the last; but, on the whole,

whole, who would have thought that Thomson could have so well imitated a person remarkable for simplicity both of sentiment and phrase?

I study no connections in a letter; and so I proceed to tell you, that I have got a machine to exhibit landscapes, &c. to advantage. It costs about fourteen shillings, and I recommend one to you or Mr. Hardy.—Smith's Views (with a little colouring) appear ravishingly;—but if you are not content with *amusement*, and want *fame* (which differs about as much as *fox-hunting* from *bare-hunting*), you must *print*.—However, if you can acquiesce in a *limited reputation*, to give you a proper weight at all your visiting-places (which I think enough for all reasonable ends and purposes), take the following receipt.

“ A Receipt to make FAME.

“ TAKE a shoe-maker into your parlour (that is reputed a good workman), and bid him procure a piece of red or blue Morocco leather; let him shape this into the size of a quarter of a sheet of paper, or it may be something larger. Let him double it in such a manner as to leave some part to wrap over; then stitch it neatly at the ends, lining it either with silk or the best yellow leather he can meet with. Then must you bespeak a silver clasp, which you *may* have gilded; but be sure it be neatly *chased*, and properly annexed to the afore-

“ said

"said Moræus leather. Make a present of this
 "to the prettiest girl you know, but filled with half
 "a dozen of your best compositions; take care that
 "one be in praise of *her* ingenuity. For modesty's
 "sake, desire her not to shew them to any living
 "soul; but, at the same time, be careful that your
 "clasp be splendid, and your letter-case made ac-
 "cording to the foregoing directions."

Adieu! seriously yours,

W. S.

LY. To a Friend, disappointing him of a Visit.

June, 1749.

FIE on Mr. N—! he has disappointed me of
 the most seasonable visit that heart could wish
 or desire.—My flowers in blossom, my walks newly
 cleaned, my neighbours invited, and I languishing
 for lack of your company! Mean time you are going
 to dance attendance on a courtier.—Would to God!
 he may disappoint *you*, according to the usual practice
 of those gentlemen;—I mean, by giving you a far
 better living than you ever expected.

I HAVE no sooner *made* than I am ready to re-
 call that wish, in order to substitute another in its
 place;

place; which is, that you may rather squat yourself down upon a fat-goose living in Warwickshire, or one in Staffordshire, or perhaps Worcestershire, of the *same denomination*. I do not mention Shropshire; because I think I am more remote from the main body of that county than I am from either of the others. But, nevertheless, by all means wait on Mr. N—; shew him all respect, yet so as not to lay out any of the profits of your *contingent* living in a black velvet waistcoat and breeches to appear before him. True merit needeth nought of this. Besides, peradventure, you may not receive the first quarter's income of it this half year. He will probably do something for you one time or other; but you shall never go into Ireland, that is certain, for less than a deanry; not for less than the deanry of St. Patrick's, if you take my advice. Lower your hopes only to advance your surprize; "*gratia super-venient quæ non sperabimus.*" Come to me *as you may*. A week is elapsed since you *began* to be detained; you may surely come over in a fortnight now at farthest;—I will be at home.—However, write directly; you know our letters are long upon their journey.—I expected you the beginning of every week, till I received your last letter, *impatiently*. For my part, I begin to wean myself from all hopes and expectations whatever.—I feed my wild ducks,

ducks, and I water my carnations! Happy enough, if I could extinguish my ambition *quite*, or *indulge* (what I hope I feel in an equal degree) the desire of being something more beneficial in my sphere.—Perhaps some few other circumstances would want also to be adjusted.

I HAVE just read Lord Bolingbroke's three letters, which I like as much as most pieces of politics I ever read. I admire, especially, the spirit of the style. I as much admire *at* the editor's unpopular preface,—I know the family hitherto *seemed* to make it a point to conceal Pope's affair; and now, the editor, under Lord B's inspection, not only relates, but invites people to think the worst of it.—What *collateral* reasons my Lord may have for thinking ill of Mr. Pope, I cannot say; but surely it is not *political* to lessen a person's character that had done one so much honour.

I am, dear Sir,

Your affectionate

W. SHENSTONE.

I HAVE this moment received a long letter from Lady Luxborough; and you are to look on all I said concerning both Lord Bolingbroke's affair and her resentment as premature. My Lady's daughter and son-in-law visit her next week.

LVI. To

LVI. To Mr. JAGO.

From The Leafowes, as it appears
on a rainy Evening, June,
1749.

Dear Sir,

IT would probably be so long before you can receive this letter by the post, that I cannot think of subjecting my *thanks for your last*, or my *hopes of seeing you soon*, to such an *uncertainty*.—I shall not now have it in my power to meet you at Mr. Wren's *immediately*, so would lose no time in requesting your company here *next week*, if you please. I hope Mrs. Jago also will accompany you, and that you will set out the first day of the week, even Monday; that you may not leave me in less than six days time, under a pretence of necessity. As to the verses you were so kind to convey, I will take occasion when you come

—“To find out, like a friend,
“Something to blame, and mickle to commend.”
So I say no more at *present* on that head.

I LOVE to *read* verses, but I *write* none. “Petti,
“nihil me sicut ante juvat scribere!”—I will not say *none*; for I wrote the following at breakfast yesterday; and they are all I have wrote since I saw you. They are now in one of the root-houses of
Virgil's

Virgil's Grove, for the admonition of my good friends the vulgar; of whom I have multitudes every Sunday evening, and who very fortunately believe in fairies, and are no judges of poetry:

"HERE in cool grot, and mossy cell,

"We tripping fawns and fairies, dwell:

"Tho' rarely seen by mortal eye,

"Oft as the moon, ascended high,

"Darts thro' yon limes her quiv'ring beam,

"We frisk it near this crystal stream.

"THEN fear to spoil these sacred bow'rs;

"Nor wound the shrubs, nor crop the flow'rs;

"So may your path with sweets abound!

"So may your couch with rest be crown'd!

"But ill-betide or nymph or swain,

"Who dares these hallow'd haunts profane.

OBERON.

I suppose the round at Hagley is compleated, but I have not seen it hitherto: neither do I often journey or visit *any where*, except when a shrub or flower is upon the point of blossoming near my walks.—I forget one visit I lately made in my neighbourhood; to a young clergyman of taste and ingenuity. His name is Pixell; he plays *finely* upon the violin, and very well upon the harpsichord: has set many things to music, some in the *soft way*, with which I was much delighted. He is young, and has

time

time to improve himself. He gave me an opportunity of being acquainted with him by frequently visiting, and introducing company to, my walks.— I met him one morning with an Italian in my grove, and our acquaintance has been growing ever since.— He has a share in an estate that is near me, and lives there at present; but I doubt will not do so long;—when you come, I will send for him.— Have you read my Lord Bolingbroke's Essays on Patriotism, &c.? and have you read Merope? and do you take in the *Magazin des Londres*? and pray how does your garden flourish? I warrant, you do not yet know the difference betwixt a ranunculus and an anemone.— God help ye!—Come to me, and be informed of the nature of all plants, from the cedar on Mount Lebanon to the hyssop that springeth out of the wall.—Pray do not fail to decorate your new garden, whence you may transplant all kinds of flowers into your verses. If by chance you make a visit at I—fifty years hence, from some distant part of England, shall you forget this little angle where you used to muse and sing? “En unquam, &c. Post aliquot, tua regna vident mirabere, aristas.”—I expect by the return of Tom to receive a trifle that will amuse you. It is a small gold seal of Vida's head, given by Vertue to a relation of mine, who published Vida, and introduced Vertue into business.—

Perhaps

Perhaps you remember Mr. Trifram of Hampton, and the day we spent there from school; it was his.

I am, very cordially,

Yours,

W. SHENSTONE.

LVII. To the same.

Dear Sir,

1749.

IT is now Sunday evening, and I have been exhibiting myself in my walks to no less than a hundred and fifty people, and that with no less state and vanity than a Turk in his seraglio.—I have *some* hopes of seeing you *this* week; but if these should happen to be frustrated, I shall find them revive with double ardour and vivacity the next. Did not you tell me of a treatise that your Mr. Miller had, where the author endeavours to vindicate and establish Gothic architecture? and does not the same man explain it also by draughts on copper plates? That very book, or rather the title and the author's name, I want.—I shall never, I believe, be entirely partial to Goths or Vandals either; but I think, by the assistance of some such treatise, I could sketch out some charming Gothic temples and Gothic benches for garden-seats.—I do also esteem it
extremely

extremely ridiculous to permit another person to design *for* you, when by sketching out your own plans you *appropriate* the merit of all you build, and feel a double pleasure from any praises which it receives.

—I had here last Wednesday Dean Lyttelton, Mr. William Lyttelton, Commodore West, Miss Lyttelton, and Miss West. They drank tea, and went round my walks, where they seemed astonished they had been so long ignorant of the beauties of the place; said, in general, every-thing that was *complaisant* or *friendly*; and left me highly delighted with *their* visit, and with room to hope for many more. Mean time, why do not *you* come? I *do* say, you are not Pylades.—What! you think, because you have an agreeable wife, and five fine children, that you must employ all your time in caressing them at home, or laying schemes for their emolument abroad? Is this public spirit? is this virtue? or, if it be virtue, dost thou think, because thou art *varnious*, there must be no cakes and ale? is it not your duty to partake of them with a *friend* sometimes; easing and relieving him under what Boileau calls,

“Le penible fardeau de n’avoir rien à faire;”

and what Pope (*stealing* from the former) denominates

“The pains and penalties of idleness.”?

PRAY come the first day of the week, and let Mr. Fancourt accompany you.—I have not much to add by way of news. The Duke of Somerset is going to lay out thirty thousand pounds upon Northumberland-house; nine houses to be purchased and pulled down on the other side the Strand for stables; the Strand there to be widened: I cannot tell you half; but one thing more I will, which is, that there will be a chapel on one side of the quadrangle, with a Gothic wainscot and cieling, and painted glass; and in it a Dutch stove, contrived so as to look like a tomb with an urn upon it.

WHAT need I *write* all this? am I not to see you in a few days?—Not a word more positively; saving what may serve to assure you that I am, dear Sir,

Inviolably yours,

The Leasowes,
July 9, 1749.

W. SHENSTONE.

LVIII. To the same.

Dear Sir,

The Leasowes,
Mar. 15, 1749-50.

THOUGH I have not hitherto troubled you with a letter, I have not been void either of *inquiry* or *information*, concerning the state of your affairs, and
of

of Mr. Hardy's health. Indeed it is now several weeks since I collected some particulars from your brother, and I am now impatient for further intelligence. As to the circumstances of our friendly reception at Wroxall, Mr. John Jago has probably enough acquainted you with them. He *would*, however, seduce me to give you a distinct account; being assured, as he says, that Mr. Wren's behaviour must afford a good subject for drollery. I do not know how far this would be proper; but I think, when I write again to my friend Wren, to give *him* a sketch of his own character, just as it appeared to us during the time of our visit. Perhaps it may avail a little. Amidst his violent passion for gardening, if he would but prune away some wild excrescences from one or two branches of his character, he might bring himself to bear good fruit. He should *weed his mind* a little; where there has sprung up a most luxuriant crop of puns, that threaten to choak all its wholesome productions—"Spinas animo fortius quam agro evellat." He has good sense and good-nature; pity he should disguise them!—not but that it is better to have the *substance* alone than the *forms alone*, and so I conclude, Since I came home, I have done little else than plant bushes, hazel, hawthorn, crabtree, elder, &c. together with some flowering shrubs that I have had given me, and some that I have purchased to the amount of twenty shillings. I think nothing remarkable has occurred; only, one miserable tempestuous day, I

had my Lord Stamford, who called to see my walks. My Lord promised to come again in the summer, and invited me more than once to Enville. By the way, he is now building a Gothic green-house by Mr. Miller's direction, and intends to build castles, and God-knows-what. By all accounts, the place is well worth seeing when you come into the country, which I hope you will not fail to do this spring. Pray do not you embroil me with Mr. Miller, in regard to any observations I made in his walks. Remember, there were a great many things with which I was highly delighted; and forget that there were a few also which I seemed less to admire. Indeed, I thought it idle to regulate my expressions, amongst friends only, by the same rules which I ought to observe in mixed company. I say *ought*, for *he* has been exceedingly favourable to *me* in his representation of The Leafowes. —I hope to see Mr. Fancourt with you, when you come this spring; and why not your brother? he can spend half a week every now and then at Wroxall.

I HAVE nothing to *insert* or *inclose* in this letter that can render it at all agreeable. —I cannot *write*, I cannot *think*. I can just muster up attention enough to give orders to my workmen; I faunter about my grounds, take snuff, and read Clarissa. This last part of my employment threatens to grow extremely *tedious*: not but the author is a man of *genius* and *nice observation*; but he might be less *prolix*. I will send
you

you "The Life of Socrates" when I can get it home from Barrels. I wish both your circumstances and mine would allow of an utter *inattention* to them; and then, I believe, our natural indolence would be a kind of match for our ambition. I shall probably enlarge my acquaintance this year; but what *dash* it? the circle of my friends with whom I can be *easy*, and *amused* much, will continue small as ever. I could dwell a good deal upon this subject; but I have only room to desire you would give me your opinion how I should inscribe my urn to Mr. Somerville. "Author of The Chace" cannot be tolerably expressed in Latin without a circumlocution. I aim at brevity, and would therefore omit it. Pray read over the specimens I have thrown together, and *oblige* me with a speedy answer, if it extend to nothing else besides yours and Mrs. Jago's health, which I ought at this time more particularly to enquire after. I am

Your most affectionate
and faithful friend,
W. SHENSTONE.

LIX. To the same.

Dear Sir,

June 11, 1750.

I ACKNOWLEDGE myself obliged to you for procuring me the pictures. I received them both very safe, as I have a pretty strong assurance I *shall* do most

Isaiah

M 3

articles

articles of which my servant Tom has the care.—He has punctuality and management, to *atone* for his *imperfections*. He brought me those paper-sculled busts from Wroxall entirely unhurt, contrary to the expectation of all that saw them; after which, he might undertake for almost any thing.—The portrait is undoubtedly a good one. I shewed it to Mr. Smart (who is a painter himself, though a clergyman), and he allowed as much; added also, that it had something of Sir Godfrey Kneller, as well as of Sir Peter Lely.—The flower-piece is very good, so far as relates to the flowers; the dog and parrot abominable, and the grapes very exceptionable. I never considered the two flower-pieces at Icheneton with attention enough to cause a preference; having never any thoughts that *either* would fall to my share. I shall add nothing with regard to your choice; but that I sincerely *hope* yours is the better piece. I never heard of Casteels, I own; nor can I find his name in any of my accounts of the painters, though they take in pretty modern ones: but I can say this for your comfort, that if he excelled in any thing, it was probably in flowers: for I see his name at the bottom of those flower-pieces that I have in water colours, as the designer of them; and I think the designs are good. Though I could wish neither the Cupid nor the fruit-piece had escaped us, yet is there no blame to be laid at your door; at least supposing that you are endowed with nothing more than rational

tional conjecture, and that you are not gifted with prophesy.

AND now, having spoken, I think, to *most* parts of your letter, I proceed to say a word or two in the way of appendix. First then, after five or six weeks work of masons and carpenters, I plainly discover that my house is an unfinishable thing;—and yet, I persuade myself, there will never be wanting a room in it, where you may spend an agreeable day with your undoubted friend.—Did I ever tell you how *unseasonably* the three fiddles struck up in my grove about an hour after you left me; and how a set of ten bells was heard from my wood the evening after? It might have passed for the harmony of some aerial spirit, who was a well-wisher to us poor mortals; but that I think, had it been so, it would have been addressed to the *better sort*, and of consequence have been heard whilst *you were here*. This by way of introduction to what I am going to tell you. Mr. Pixell has made an agreement with his club at Birmingham, to give me a day's music in some part of my walks. The time is not yet fixed; but, if you were an idle man, and could be brought over at a day or two's notice, I would give it you, and be in hopes I could entertain you very agreeably.

You cannot think how much you gratified my vanity when you were here, by saying, that if this place were yours, you thought you should be less able to keep within the bounds of *economy* than myself.—God knows, it is pain and grief to me to observe her rules at *all*; and *rigidly* I never can.—How is it possible to possess improveable scenes, and not wish to improve them? and how is it possible, with *economy*, to be at the expence of improving them upon my fortune? To be continually in fear of excess in perfecting every trifling design, how irksome! to be restrained from attempting *any*, how vexatious! so that I never can enjoy my situation—that is certain.—*Oeconomy*, that invidious old matron! on occasion of every frivolous expence, makes such a hellish squawling, that the murmur of a cascade is utterly lost to me.—Often do I cry out with Cowley,

“O rivers! brooks! when, when in *you*, shall I

“Myself, eas’d of *un-peaceful* thoughts, espy!

“O woods and groves! when, when shall I be
“made

“The happy tenant of your shade!”

PAPER fails: abruptly therefore, but sincerely and affectionately,

I am, dear Sir,

Yours,

W. SHENSTONE.

LX. To

LX. To C— W—, Esq.

Dear Sir,

The Leasowes, Sept. 9, 1750.

PRAY, is laziness an excuse for not writing? Tell me.—However, if it be so, I am afraid I shall want an excuse for laziness; like the philosopher, who, supposing the world might rest upon a tortoise's back, found himself no less embarrassed for a pedestal to support his tortoise. I have, indeed, been pretty busy at home in raising a pool-dam, and have interchanged a few visits with such of my acquaintance as live within three miles.—What then?—I abominate all excuses that are grounded upon the business or amusements of an idle man—as if such a person's time was so wholly filled up, that he could not find half an hour to write a line to his friend. It is best to acknowledge laziness at first, and that there are particular intervals, when one is much less disposed to write even a few lines than at others; and then, as to laziness, one has nothing to do but to plead human frailty; which, if a person has not too many frailties besides, may perhaps be indulged him. However, “*Veniam petimusque,*” “*damusque,*” will not fail to weigh with every good-natured man. The chief dealing I have with Harris the Jew is, for the intelligence which he brings me concerning you and Mrs. W—; but it seldom amounts

to

to much more than that you are well, and in your garden.

HE is an Ebrew Jew, or he would tell me you had purchased a couple of genteel horses, or a chaise and pair, and were coming over to The Leasowes to spend a week with me.

NEVERTHELESS, I hope to see you soon: but *en passant* I assure you, I shall go in about a month to Mr. Jago's, and from thence to Mr. Miller's; who, I believe I told you, was here, with Mr. Lyttelton, Lady Aylesbury, Colonel Conway, &c. I think I never answered your query concerning Colonel Lyttelton.—He is the same person that you remember, and your prophesy concerning him has been literally accomplished. He is a man of courage, genius, generosity, and politeness; has been fortunate in the world; was made a Colonel at about six and twenty; distinguished himself in several campaigns; married the Dutchess of Bridgewater; and had the other day about sixteen thousand pounds left him by Colonel Jefferies, a very distant relation. He has a seat, and speaks, in the House of Commons; has bought a town and country-house, the latter of which he is ornamenting in the modern way. His Dutchess the most unceremonious even-tempered woman that lives.—So enjoy the spirit of prophesy, and exert it again.—It needs little more than

than good sense. Which of the historians is it, that foretold in his history a very remarkable series of events, by dint of this alone, and which were all accomplished? Let me know what you are doing now. Have you repaired the farm-house you talked of?—and have you remembered to make the man a couple of good large niches in his chimney corner, where he and his family may spend a more comfortable evening than was ever spent by any first minister in Christendom—perhaps also converse more to the purpose? You tell me nothing of your Mr. Jago, Seignior Benedict, the new-married man. Tell him to leave his wife and family for a day or two, saddle his mule, and come over to The Leafowes. —Tell him, all pleasures are heightened by a little discontinuance.—Tell him, did I say?—how can you for shame advise him so contrarily to your own practice?

Believe me, dear Sir,

Very faithfully yours,

W. SHENSTONE.

LXI. To

LXI. To the same

The Leafowes,
Nov. 2, 1750.

Dear Sir,

I never can be that I owe you for three letters; as to two, I will agree with you; one that I received together with my books, and the other soon after; but that I am indebted for more than these—

"Crèdat Judæus Apella,

"Non ego."

Even that same "Judæus Apella" who affords me this very opportunity of sending my compliments to you and Mrs. W—, and of assuring you, that if I had not purposed to have seen you, I had wrote to you long ago.

MASTER Harris talks very respectfully of your garden; and we have no dispute, save only in one point—he says, that you labour very hard in your vocation; whereas I am not willing to allow that all the work you ever did, or will do in it, is worth a single bunch of radishes. However, I dare not contradict him too much, because he waits for my letter.

How happy are you, that can hold up your spade, and cry, "Avaunt, Satan!" when a toyman offers
you

you his deceitful vanities! Do not you rejoice inwardly, and pride yourself greatly in your own philosophy?

" 'Twas thus—

" The wise Athenian cross'd a glitt'ring fair:

" Unmov'd by tongues and sights he walk'd the

" place,

" Thro' tape, tags, tinsel, gimp, perfume, and

" lace;

" Then bends from Mars's Hill his awful eyes,

" And, "What a world I never want!" he cries."

PARNEEL.

Mean time, do not despise others that can find any needful amusement in what, I think, Bunyan very aptly calls *Vanities Fair*; I have been at it many times this season, and have bought many kinds of merchandize there. It is a part of philosophy, to adapt one's passions to one's way of life; and the solitary unsocial sphere in which I move makes me think it happy that I can retain a relish for such trifles as I can draw into it. Mean time, I dare not reason too much upon this head. Reason, like the famous concave mirror at Paris, would, in two minutes, vitrify all the Jew's pack: I mean, that it would immediately destroy all the form, colour, and beauty, of every thing that is not merely useful.—

useful.—But I ramble too far, and you do not want such speculations. My intent, when I sat down, was to tell you, that I shall probably see you very soon, and certainly remain in the mean time, and at all times, Sir,

Your obliged

and very faithful servant,

W. SHENSTONE.

LXII. To a Friend, on various Subjects.

Dear Mr. —,

WITH the utmost gratitude for the observations which you sent me, and with the highest opinion of their propriety in general, do I fit down to answer your obliging letter. You will not take it amiss, I know, if I scribble broken hints, and trace out little sketches of my mind, just as I should go near to explain it if I were upon the spot, as often as I think of you, which I beg leave to assure you happens many times in a day. They say, "A word to the wise is enough;" a word, therefore, to a friend of understanding may be supposed to be something more than enough, because it is probable he is acquainted with three parts of one's mind

mind before.—The censure you have passed upon Milton's *Lycidas*, so far as it regards the metre which he has chosen, is unexceptionably just; and one would imagine, if that argument concerning the distance of the rhimes were pressed home in a public essay, it should be sufficient to extirpate that kind of verse for ever. As to my opinion concerning the choice of English metre, I dare not touch upon the subject; and I will give you my reason: I began upon it in a letter which I intended for you about a month ago; and I soon found that I had filled a sheet of paper with my dissertation, and left no room for other things which I had more mind to communicate. Beside, I found it so blotted that I did not chuse to send it; and as the subject is so extremely copious, I shall decline it entirely, till *talking* may prove as effectual as *writing*.—As to your advice with regard to my publications, I believe it to be just, and shall, in all probability, pursue it.—I am afraid, by your account, that Doddsley has published my name to “*The School-mistress*.” I was a good deal displeased at his publishing that poem without my knowledge, when he had so many opportunities of giving me some previous information; but, as he would probably disregard my resentment, I chose to stifle it, and wrote to him directly upon the receipt of yours, that I would be glad to furnish him with an improved copy of “*The School-mistress*,” &c. for his second edition. He accepts it with some complaisance,

complaisance, desires it soon; and I am at a fault to have the opinion of my friends, what alterations or additions it will be proper to insert. I have scribbled a copy, which I send this day to Mr. Graves and Mr. Whistler; but I am greatly fearful I shall not receive their criticisms time enough, and I shall have the same longing for yours. A journey to Whitchurch, which I have long proposed, might unite all these advantages; and I heartily wish I may be able to effect it without inconvenience. If I go thither, I call on you.

I am,

ever and entirely, yours,

W. SHENSTONE,

LXIII. To the same.

Dear Sir,

The Leasowes,

Mar. 28, 1751.

WHAT a stupid fool was I, to shew you those letters of my friend Graves, wherein he declares himself so freely against a regular correspondence! See the effects of it! You have taken immediate advantage of his example, and I must never more expect an answer to any letter that I send you,

in

in less than half a century. I wrote to you after I came home, to thank you for all your kindness at I—, &c.; but not a syllable have I been able to receive from you, or a word that I could hear concerning you. I could, however, very easily convince you, that Mr. Graves (your precedent) is not altogether so hardened an offender as you may imagine. His last letter is a very affectionate recantation. I inclose that part of it which regards Mr. F—.

What a number of schemes are irreparably broken by the sudden death of the Prince of Wales! Yours, my good friend, which seems to be destroyed amongst the rest, has, I think, of late given you no solicitude. Your interest in Mr. N— will remain the same, I suppose; and if he would but serve you nearer home, I will have no sort of quarrel with him that he did not transplant you into Cornwall.—It is at least some gratification to a person's self-love, when one finds the more *ambitious* hopes of more *aspiring* people liable to be suddenly extinguished as one's own. However, the death of the Prince gave me a good deal of concern, though it no way affected my *particular* interest, as he had all the humane, affable, and generous qualities, which could recommend him to one's *affection*.

Mr. Graves has sent me two copies of verses. One on Medals, to Mr. Walker; and the other, on the late Memoirs of the London Heroines, Lady V—, Mrs. Pilkington, and Mrs. Phillips. Both good in their way, which you shall see when you come over.

HAVE you seen the first books of "The Scribleriad," by Mr. Cambridge?—The "Verses written in a Country Church-yard?"—Mr. W. Whitehead's "Ode to the Nymph of Bristol Spring?"—or, what have you seen?—You live infinitely more in the world than I do; who hear nothing, see nothing, do nothing, and am nothing. Remedy this unhappiness, by sending me somewhat that may rouse my attention.—I must except what I hear from my Lady Luxborough, who indulges me now and then with a letter in French.

If you should think this letter more than usually dull, you must know, that, since I saw you, I have been generally dispirited; till about a fortnight ago I found some nervous disorders that I greatly disliked, and upon examination was told I had a nervous fever. For this I have been taking saline draughts and bolus's, and hope I am something better; though I am far from well. I would not indeed have written to you at this time, but I chose not to defer sending the inclosed postscript.—You

who have shared many of my *happiest* hours, will excuse the produce of a more than ordinarily dull one.

Mrs. Arnold comes up to enquire after my health, and wishes I may get better, that I may stir out and see the *pretty creatures in the barn*. It seems, she has a cow or two that have calved since I kept my room.

Why should I prolong a letter that has no kind of chance to afford you any amusement? Make my compliments to Mrs. —, and believe me to be ever most affectionately

Yours,

W. SHENSTONE.

I HAVE just taken and signed a lease for life of the terrace beyond my wood, for which I am to pay annually the sum of one shilling. — Am not I a man of great worldly importance, to purchase ground and take leases thus? — What matters it whether the articles that *secure* the premises to me would also cover them or not?

Mr. service to Mr. F. — why will he not come and spend a week with me? — I think you cannot both be absent at a time.

LXIV. To Mr. GRAVES.

The Leaflowes,

Dear Mr. Graves, Feb. 16, 1750.

SINCE I received your letter, I have been a week at W—. I believe I may have told you, that I never was fond of that place. There is too much trivial elegance, too much punctilio for me; and perhaps, as you express it, too much speculation. But I was fearful I might entirely lose Mr. Whistler's acquaintance, if I did not make an effort once in five years to return his visit. Besides, I should have had no hopes of seeing him at The Leaflowes hereafter; and I am extremely desirous of seeing both him and you here, having made many alterations which I do not undertake but with an eye to the approbation of my more ingenious friends; but he seems, to my great surprize, to renounce the thing called *taste* in buildings, gardens, &c. is grown weary of his own little embellishments at W—, and longs to settle in London for the greater part of his time. This, I believe, he would put in execution immediately; but that he thinks it might give some uneasiness to his mother, if he should quit the house that he with so much difficulty obtained for him. I too am sick of the word *taste*; but I think the thing itself the only proper *ambition*, and the *greatest* pleasure of all who have any share in the faculty of imagination. I need not mention my reasons; you will

will soon conceive them. And, however the case be, there is one branch of it which so totally engrosses the persons with whom I principally converse, that I was astonished to hear him speak even with indifference concerning the reigning taste for rural decorations. I could ill forbear telling Mr. Whistler, that he was now *literally* a beau in a band-box; but the freedom might have given more offence than the joke was worth. He has improved the place extremely; but I do not like his colonnades. You know, nothing of that kind is tolerable, unless regularly executed in stone: that is one thing. Another is, that colonnades are ornaments which will not bear to be very *diminutive*. Mr. — (whose house only I saw) has been at the expence of a large cornice round it, in most elaborate brick-work; but with regard to his stucco-work *within* doors, he is quite *extravagant*.—I mention these things upon a supposition that you may like to hear *any* thing that regards the place; but indeed they are so mighty trifling, that I ought to doubt my supposition. I supped with Mr. P——'s family once at Mr. W——'s, and once at Mr. W——'s, and all was mighty well; only I happen to have a violent aversion to card-playing, and at W—— I think they do nothing *else*: so that, on account of my ignorance at quadrille, or any creditable game, I was forced to lose my money, and two evenings out of my seven, at Pope Joan with Mr.

P——'s children. Mr. W——, to make me amends, invited me to breakfast, and shewed me your verses. I assure you, you have no occasion for a better advocate than Mr. W——; whether with regard to his *judgement*, or his zeal in behalf of the subject, the verses, or the poet. I would fain have obtained a copy; but he did not care to give one without your commission. I hope you will oblige me so far. I like them very much; the subject is genteel, and the verses easy and elegant. We agreed upon one or two different readings; and one stanza that concerns cards should, I think, be corrected. Not that I would have you less severe upon cards neither; I was even glad to find, that you gave them so little quarter. I sometimes thought that Mr. W——'s seeming fondness for them was a kind of *contre-cœur*.—Be that as it will, his objection to the stanza, as well as mine, was solely founded on the versification, not the sentiment. I liked his Latin verses; but they do not interfere with yours. Send me a copy, and confine my use of it by what limitations you please. My reigning toy at present is a pocket-book; and I glory as much in furnishing it with the verses of my acquaintance, as others would with bank-bills. I did not know when I went to W——, but I might have heard Mrs. G—— *accused of certain questions touching their law* (I mean of forms and ceremonies); but I did not. On the contrary, I had the satisfaction of hearing

hearing her person, her temper, and her understanding, much commended; but this I did not want: the delicacy of your taste is equal with me to a thousand commendations. Mrs. W— is really so much altered by her indisposition, that I did not know her. She talks of going to Bath this season; —I talked of it too, and wish it of all earthly things. You must know, I could not have come to Claverton *instead* of going to W—, as I did not determine on the expedition at home; but at a friend's house, where I was betwixt twenty and thirty miles on my way thither. Besides, I would allow myself more time when I turn my face towards Bath, than I could this winter. Your invitation, as it is very obliging, so it has many concurring circumstances to recommend it at this time. I want to recover my health, which must be recovered by Bath, or *nothing*; I want to have you read some trifles of mine, which must be ratified by you, or *no one*; but principally, and above all, do I long to see you, my old friend, and Mrs. G—, whom I expect you should render my new one,—I am obliged for your charitable endeavours to support my spirits. Your company would do it effectually, but scarce any thing less, in *winter*. Solitary life, limited circumstances, a phlegmatic habit, and disagreeable events, have given me a melancholy turn, that is hardly dissipated by the most serene sky; but in a north-east wind is quite intolerable. After a long state of this kind, upon

every access of amusement, one is apt to think it is not *right* to be happy; that it is one of Wollaston's implicit lyes; a treating things contrary to what they *deserve*.—Your situation at Claverton is admired by most people; and, if you could connect some little matter in the neighbourhood, would be as surely envied.

It is now high time to release you.—This is not a letter, but an olio. I desire my compliments to Mrs. G—, and am affectionately and invariably

Yours,

W. SHENSTONE.

As I must now use a frank, I will send you a few inscriptions: your imagination will supply the scenery, on which what merit they may have depends. There *were* different readings in the first copy, of which I beg your opinion.

Stanza the first.

"At least this calm sequester'd shade

"Ambition never dares invade

"No, &c.

"But shuns, &c."

Stanza the second.

"Hither the plaintive *balcyon* hies,

"Avoiding all the race that flies."

My

My design was only to convey some pleasing ideas of things, which, though proper to the place, a person might not chance to see there once in twenty times. Mr. Lyttelton and Lady Aylesbury *necessitated* me to give them copies, though they probably did it out of complaisance only: I gave them in the manner I send them you. I hope you have not entirely dropt your love for rural scenes, of which you were once so fond. I will allow your taste for medals to preponderate.—I beg, dear Sir, you would neglect no *opportunity* of calling on me.—I will come to Claverton when I can.

LXV. To a Friend.

The Leaflowes,

Sept. 17, 1751.

—Dear Mr. G—,

I AM very sensibly obliged to you for the *diligence* and *expedition* which you have shewn in answering my late request: I cannot feel the very *tenderness* of friendship to be at all abated in me by our long separation; nor will it at any time be possible I should, so long as I receive such testimonies of your usual *kindness* and *ingenuity*.—I have no sort of exceptions to make against the province in which you were engaged at Cheltenham, nor the light in which you appeared. What you lost in any one's opinion
of

of your independency, you would gain in their idea of your merit, genius, and learning; and then you had all those other advantages *par desu*.—As to the compliments that were paid to Mrs. G—, you have something of the same sort of reason to be pleased with them, that I have to be pleased with those that are given to my place; which I consider as naturally possessed of many beauties, each of them brought to light and perfected through my own discernment, care, and cultivation. And then your pleasure ought to be so much greater than mine, as you have a nobler subject to enjoy.—Mrs. G— has too much sense to object against the freedom of this similitude.

I CANNOT help adding a few strokes to your picture of Mrs. S—. I think her an extremely *superficial* female-pedant: for, after an interval of many years since I first conversed with her at Mr. —'s, I found her conversation turn solely upon the same topics, definitions, and quotations. I believe, I could easily enough have recommended myself to a greater degree of her favour; but her vanity and affectations were beyond what I could bear.—Your account of — is very picturesque, and agreeable to the idea I always had of him; but I believe that idea was perfected by what observations I made when I had some of his company at London.—There was something accountable enough to me in their burlesquing

lesquing Mr. L—'s monody. He is, you know, engaged in a party; and his poem (though an extraordinary fine composition) was too tender for the public ear. It should have been printed privately, and a number of copies dispersed only among their friends and acquaintances;—but even so it would have been re-published; and it was too good to suppress. I wish the burlesquers of such *ingenuous* profusions could be punished, consistently with English liberty. "Where were ye, Muses, &c." is imitated from Milton, and taken by Milton from Theocritus. I write Greek wretchedly; but you will remember the passage,

Πᾶ ὥκα' ἄρ' ἦδ' ὅκα Δάφνις ἱράνιστο; πᾶ ὥκα, Νύμφαι;

I HEARD, once before, it was burlesqued under the title of "An Elegy on the Death of a favourite Cat;" but the burlesque will die, and the poem will survive.—You tell me, "The Author of "Peregrine Pickle says, if you will flatter Mr. Lytton well, he will at last make you a Middlesex "Justice;" and it happened oddly that, whilst I was reading your letter, a neighbour told me, I was put in the commission of the peace. I have never received a single line from Mr. Whistler, and I believe my journey to W— has given the final blow to our friendship. Pray was not Mr. Blandy some relation of theirs, or only their attorney? The affair

fair is uncommonly shocking; and I fancy the *genuine* accounts that Mr. W— sends you will be curious anecdotes at Bath.—I suppose you have painted your room with oil colours, and made it *really* handsome.—I drew out a festoon and a medal some time ago, for a pannel over Mr. P—'s chimney; but they knew not what to make of the medal, and had only the festoon executed in stone colour, by a common painter;—yours is better, and in character.—I am a degree more frugal than you; for I only use quick lime, and either blue or yellow sand, to take away the objection which I have to whitened walls.

I PAID a visit to Mr. Lyttelton, the Dean, &c. since he came down; but had little of their company, for they thought Sir Thomas was dying: however, by unparalleled strength of constitution, he lingered in violent pain till last Saturday, when he died, very much lamented. He had good natural parts, well improved by reading modern writers, and by the knowledge of the world: extremely prudent, confederate, humane, polite, and charitable.—I have jumbled his more obvious qualities together, that you may not think I am usurping the province of a news-man. Sir George will lose no time in building a new house, or doing what is more than *equivalent* to the old one.

I WANT

I WANT no temptation to come immediately to C—. This is a melancholy season with me always; whether it be owing to the scenes I see, or to the effect of hazy skies upon an ill-perspiring skin.—I can say no more at present, than that I most ardently desire to see you, and desire my humble service to Mrs. G—. I have a chalybeat spring in the middle of my grotto: what think you of this inscription?

"FONS FERRUGINEVS

"DIVARVM OPTVMAR

"SALVTI SACER

Is it antique?

I am, dear Mr. G—,

Your most affectionate

W. SHENSTONE

LXVI. TO MR. GRAVES, on the Death of Mr. SHENSTONE's Brother.

The Leasowes,

Dear Mr. Graves,

Feb. 24, 1752.

YOU will be amazed at my long silence; and it might reasonably excite some disgust if my days had passed off late in the manner they used to do: but I am not the man I was; perhaps I never

shall

shall be. Alas! my dearest friend! I have lost my only brother! and, since the fatal close of November, I have had neither peace nor respite from agonizing thoughts!

You, I think, have *seen* my brother; but perhaps had no opportunity of distinguishing him from the groupe of others whom we call *good-natured* men. This part of his character was so visible in his countenance, that he was generally beloved at sight; I, who must be allowed to know him, do assure you, that his understanding was no way inferior to his benevolence. He had not only a sound judgement, but a lively wit and genuine humour. As these were many-times eclipsed by his native bashfulness, so his benevolence only suffered by being shewn to an excess. I here mean his giving too indiscriminately into those jovial meetings of company, where the warmth of a social temper is discovered with least reserve; but the virtues of his head and heart would soon have shone without alloy. The foibles of his youth were wearing off; and his affection for me and regard to my advice, with his own good sense, would soon have rendered him all that I could have wished in a successor. I never in my life knew a person more sincere in the expression of his love or dislike. But it was the *former* that suited the propensity of his heart; the *latter* was as transient as the starts of passion that occasioned it. In short,
with

with much true genius and real fortitude, he was, according to the *English* acceptation, "a truly honest man;" and I think I may also add, a truly English character; but "habeo, dixi? immo habeo!" "fratrem & amicum, Chreme!" All this have I lost in him. He is now in regard to *this* world no more than a mere idea; and this idea, therefore, though deeply tinged with melancholy, I must, and surely *ought* to, cherish and preserve.

I BELIEVE I wrote you some account of his illness last spring; from which to all appearance he was tolerably well recovered. He took the air, and visited about with me, during the warmer months of summer; but my pleasure was of short duration. "Hæsit lateri lethalis arundo!" The peripneumony under which he laboured in the spring had terminated in an adhesion of the lungs to the pleura, so that he could never lie but upon his right side; and this, as the weather grew colder, occasioned an obstruction that could never be surmounted.

THOUGH my reason forewarned me of the event, I was not the more prepared for it.—Let me not dwell upon it.—It is altogether insupportable in every respect; and my imagination seems more assiduous in educing pain from this occasion, than I ever yet found it in administering to my pleasure.—This hurts me to no purpose—I know it; and yet,
when

when I have avocated my thoughts, and fixed them for a while upon common amusements, I suffer the same sort of consciousness as if I were guilty of a crime. Believe me, this has been the most sensible affliction I ever felt in my life; and you, who know my anxiety when I had far less reason to complain, will more easily conceive it now, than I am able to describe it.

I CANNOT pretend to fill up my paper with my usual subjects.—I should thank you for your remarks upon my poetry; but I despise poetry: and I might tell you of all my little rural improvements; but I hate them.—What can I now expect from my solitary rambles through them, but a series of melancholy reflections and irksome anticipations?—Even the pleasure, I should take in shewing them to you, the greatest they can afford me, must be now greatly inferior to what it might formerly have been.

How have I prostituted my sorrow on occasions that little concerned me! I am ashamed to think of that idle “Elegy upon Autumn,” when I have so much more important cause to hate and to condemn it now; but the glare and gaiety of the Spring is what I *principally* dread; when I shall find all things restored but my poor brother, and something like those lines of Milton will run for ever in my thoughts:

“Thus,

Thus, with the year,

"Seasons return; but not to me returns.

"A brother's cordial smile, at eve or morn."

I shall then seem to wake from amusements, company, every sort of inebriation with which I have been endeavouring to lull my grief asleep, as from a dream; and I shall feel as if I were, *that instant*, despoiled of all I have chiefly valued for thirty years together; of all my present happiness, and all my future prospects. The melody of birds, which he no more must hear; the chearful beams of the sun, of which he no more must partake; every wonted pleasure will produce that sort of pain to which my temper is most obnoxious. Do not consider this as poetry.—Poetry on such occasions is no more than literal truth. In the present case it is *less*; for half the tenderness I feel is altogether shapeless and inexpressible.

AFTER all, the wisdom of the world may perhaps esteem me a gainer. Ill do they judge of this event, who think that any shadow of amends can be made for the death of a brother, and the disappointment of all my schemes, by the accession of some fortune, which I never can enjoy!

THIS is a mournful narrative: I will not, therefore, enlarge it.—Amongst all changes and chances, I often think of you; and pray there may be no

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O

suspicion

suspicion or jealousy betwixt us during the rest of our lives.

I am, dear Sir,

most affectionately yours,

W. SHENSTONE.

LXVII. To C— W—, Esq.

ALAS! dear Mr. W—! the terrible event has happened! I have lost the best of brothers; and you are to pity, not to condemn, your unfortunate correspondent.

ABOUT the middle of November I had prepared a letter for you, which lies now amongst my papers. At that time, amidst all my apprehensions, I had some hopes to support me; but before I could send it, my situation was greatly altered, and the month did not wholly expire, till it had effectually rendered me the most wretched of mankind.

THUS much it was necessary I should tell you; you will pardon me, if I do not descend any farther into an account of merit that is lost, and of sorrow which is too apt to revive of itself. Be assured, it is to me a loss which the whole world cannot compensate;

penfate; and an affliction which the longest time I can live will not be able to erase.

You said, you would let Master W—come and spend a few days with me.—I beseech you do.—It will be some relief to me; and, God knows, I have occasion enough for every assistance that can be drawn from correspondence, company, or amusement.

You, Sir, I presume, proceed in the innocent recreations of your garden, and those may at least prove a balance for any small disquiets that attend you. If greater ills befall you, you have persons near you to alleviate them—a wife, family, visitants male and female, friends in abundance, and a table sufficiently hospitable to attract even your enemies. With me the case is otherwise. What I have undergone this winter, may you never feel so much as in apprehension!

Believe me, my friend,

affectionately and invariably yours,

ix Kal. March,
MDCCLII.

W. SHENSTONE.

LXVIII. To the same.

Dear Mr. W.—July 22, 1752.

I DO not know why I made you a promise of a pretty long letter. What I now write will be but a moderate one, both in regard to length and stile; yet write I must, *par maniere d'acquit*, and you have brought four-pence expence upon yourself for a parcel of nonsense, and to no manner of purpose. This is not tautology, you must observe; for nonsense sometimes answers very considerable purposes.—In love, it is eloquence itself.—In friendship, therefore, by all the rules of sound logic, you must allow it to be something; what I cannot say, "*nequeo monstrare, & sentio tantum.*" The principal part of a correspondence betwixt two idle men consists in two important enquiries—what we do, and how we do; but as all persons ought to give satisfaction before they expect to receive it, I am to tell you, in the first place, that my own health is tolerably good, or rather what I must call good, being, I think, much better than it has been this last half year.—Then as touching my occupation, alas! "Othello's occupation's gone!" I neither read nor write aught besides a few letters; and I give myself up entirely to scenes of dissipation; lounge at my Lord Dudley's for near a week together; make dinners; accept of invitations; sit up till three o'clock in the morning

with

with young sprightly married women, over white port and *vin de paysans*; ramble over my fields; issue out orders to my hay-makers; foretel rain and fair weather; enjoy the fragrance of hay, the cocks, and the wind-rows; admire that universal lawn which is produced by the scythe; sometimes inspect, and draw mouldings for my carpenters; sometimes paper my walls, and at other times my ciellings; do every social office that falls in my way, but never seek out for any.

“SEN vos quid tandem? quæ circumvolitas agilis thyma? non tu corpus eras sine pectore. Non tibi parvum ingenium, non incultum est?” In short, what do you? and how do you do?—that is all.

TELL my young pupil, your son, he must by all manner of means send me a Latin letter: and if he have any billet in French for Miss Lea at The Grange, or even in Hebrew, Coptic, or Syriac, I will engage it shall be received very graciously. Thither am I going to dinner this day, and there “implebor veteris Bacchi, pinguisque ferinæ.”

ALL this looks like extreme jollity; but is this the true state of the case, or may I not more properly apply the

"Spem vultu simulat, premit atrum corde do-
 "lorem;"

ACCEPT this scrawl in place of a letter, and be-
 lieve me

Ever most affectionately yours,

W. SHENSTONE.

LXIX. To Mr. G—, on the Receipt of his Picture.

Dear Mr. G—,

The Leasowes,
 Oct. 3, 1752.

I AM very unfeignedly ashamed to reflect how long it is since I received your present, and how much longer it is since I received your letter. I have been resolving to write to you almost daily ever since you left me; yet have foolishly enough permitted avocations (of infinitely less importance than your correspondence) to interfere with my gratitude, my interest; and my inclination. What apology I have to make, though no way adequate to my negligence, is in short as follows. After the receipt of your letter, I deferred writing till I could speak of the arrival of your picture.—This did not happen till about a month or five weeks ago, when I was embarrassed with masons, carvers, carpenters, and company,

pany, all at a time. And though it were idle enough to say, that I could not find *one* vacant hour for my purpose, yet in truth my head was so confused by these multifarious distractions, that I could have written nothing satisfactory either to *myself* or *you*: nothing worth a single *penny*, supposing the postage were to cost you no more. The workmen had not *finished my rooms* a minute, when Lady Luxborough, Mrs. Davies, and Mr. Outing arrived, with *five* servants and a *set* of horses, to stay with me for some time. After a nine days visit, I returned with them to Barrels, where I continued for a week; and whither (by the way) I go again with Lord Dudley in about a fortnight's time. Other company filled up the interstices of my summer; and I hope my dear friend will accept of this apology for so long a chasm of silence, during which I have been uniformly at his service, and true to that inviolable friendship I shall ever bear him.

I PROCEED now to thank you for the *distinction* you shew me, in sending me your picture: I do it very sincerely. It is assuredly a strong likeness, as my Lady Luxborough with all her servants that have *seen you* pronounce, as well as I; consequently more valuable to a *friend* than a face he does not know, though it were one of Raphael's. The smile about the mouth is bad; as it agrees but ill with the gravity of the eyes, and as a smile ever so little

outré has a bad effect in a picture where it is *constant*, though it may be ever so graceful in a person where it is *transitory*. However, this may be altered, when I can meet with a good painter. I have no other objection, but to the prominence of the belly. The hair, I think, is good; and the coat and band no way exceptionable. I have given it all the advantage I can: it has a good light, and makes part of an elegant chimney-piece in a genteel, though little breakfast-room, at the end of my house.

Mr. Whistler and I are now upon good terms, and two or three friendly letters have been interchanged betwixt us. He presses me to come to Whitchurch, and I *him* to come over to The Leasowes; but the winter cometh, when no man can visit.—The dispute is adjusted by *time*, whilst we are arguing it by *expostulation*.—No uncommon event in most sublunary projects!

LADY Luxborough said very extraordinary things in praise of Mrs. G—, after you left us at Barrels; yet I sincerely believe no more than she deserves. I took the liberty of shewing her your letter here, as it included a compliment to her which I thought particularly genteel.—She will always consider you as a person of genius, and her friend.

DURING

DURING most of this summer (wherein I have seen much company either here or at Lord Dudley's), I have been almost constantly engaged in one continued scene of *jollity*. I endeavoured to find relief from such sort of dissipation; and, when I had once given in to it, I was obliged to proceed; as, they say, is the case when persons disguise their faces with paint. Mine was a sort of *painting* applied to my temper—"Spem vultu simulare, pretere atrum corde dolorem." And the moment I left it off, my soul appeared again all haggard and forlorn. My company has now deserted me; the spleen-fog begin to rise; and the terrible incidents of last winter revive apace in my memory. This is my state of mind, while I write you these few lines; yet, I thank God, my health is not much amiss.

I did not forget my promise of a box, &c. to Mrs. G—. I had a dozen sent me, one or two of which I could have liked, had they been better finished. They were of a good oval, white enamel, with flowers, &c. but horribly gilt, and not accurately painted. I beg my best service to her, and will make a fresh essay. My dearest friend, accept this awkward letter for the present.—In a few posts, I will write again.—Believe me yours from the bottom of my soul.

W. SHENSTONE.

o I will

I WILL send you a label for made-wine, after my own plan. It is enamel, with grapes, shepherd's pipe, &c. The motto "VIN DE FAISAN."

LXX. To Mr. Jago.

Dear Mr. Jago,

The Leasowes,
Nov. 15, 1752.

COULD I with convenience mount my horse, and ride to Harbury this instant, I should much more willingly do so than begin this letter. Such terrible events have happened to us, since we saw each other last, that, however irksome it may be to dwell upon them, it is in the same degree unnatural to substitute any subject in their place.

I do sincerely forgive your long silence, my good friend, indeed I do; though it gave me uneasiness. I hope you do the same by mine. I own, I could not readily account for the *former* period of yours, any otherwise than by supposing that I had said or done something, in the levity of my heart, which had given you disgust; but being conscious to myself of the most sincere regard for you, and believing it could never be discredited for any *trivial* inadvertencies, I remember, I continued still in expectation of a letter, and did not dream of writing till such time as I had

received one. I trusted you would write at *last*; and that, by all my past endeavours to demonstrate my *friendship*, you would believe the *tree* was rooted in my heart, whatever irregularity you might observe in the *branches*.

THIS was my situation before that dreadful era which gave me such a shock as to banish my best friends for a time out of my memory. And when they recurred, as they did the first of any thing, I was made acquainted with that deplorable misfortune of yours. Believe me, I sympathized in *your* affliction, notwithstanding my own; but alas! what comfort could I administer, who had need of every possible assistance to support myself? I wrote indeed a few letters with *difficulty*; amongst the rest, one to my friend Graves; but it was to vent my complaint.—I will send you the letter, if you please, as it is by far my least painful method of conveying you some account of my situation. Let it convince you, that I could have written nothing at that time, which could have been of any service to you: let it afford you, at least, a faint sketch of my dearest brother's character; but let it not appear an ostentatious display of sorrow, of which I am by no means guilty. I know but too well that I discovered upon the occasion, what some would call, an unmanly tenderness; but I know also, that sorrow upon such subjects as these is very consistent with virtue, and with the most absolute resignation to the just decrees

decrees of Providence—"Hominis est enim affici dolore, sentire; resistere tamen & solatia admittere, non solatibus non egere." Pliny.—I drank, purchased amusements, never suffered myself to be a minute without company, no matter what, so it was but continual. At length, by an attention to such conversation and such amusements as I could at other times despise, I forgot so far as to be chearful.—And after this, the summer, through an almost constant succession of lively and agreeable visitants, proved even a scene of jollity.—It was inebriation all, though of a mingled nature; yet has it maintained a sort of truce with grief, till time can assist me more effectually by throwing back the event to a distance.—Now, indeed, that my company has all forsaken me, and I am delivered up to winter, silence, and reflection, the incidents of the last year revive apace in my memory; and I am even astonished to think of the gaiety of my summer. The fatal anniversary, the "dies quem semper acerbum, &c." is beginning to approach, and every face of the sky suggests the ideas of last winter.—Yet I find myself chearful in company; nor would I recommend it to you to be much alone.—You would lay the highest obligation upon me by coming over at this time.—I pressed your brother, whom I saw at Birmingham, to use his influence with you; but if you can by no means undertake the journey, I will take my speediest opportunity of seeing you at Harbury.—Mr. Miller invited me strenuously

to meet Dr. Lyttelton at his house; but I believe my most convenient season will be, when my Lord Dudley goes to Barrels; for I can but ill bear the pensiveness of a long and lonely expedition. After all, if you *could* come hither first, it would afford me the most entire satisfaction.—I have been making alterations in my house that would amuse you; and have many matters to discourse with you, which it would be endless to mention upon paper.—Adieu! my dear friend! may your merit be known to some one who has greater *power* to serve you than myself; but be assured, at the same time, that no one loves you better, or esteems you more.

W. SHENSTONE.

LXXI. To the same.

The Leasowes,

Dear Mr. Jago, Jan. 29, 1753.

ALTHOUGH I have many reasons to urge why I did not write to you before, or visit you from Barrels as I fully intended, I will venture to wave all particulars till I see you; and only assure you in the general, that I was never able to write any thing satisfactory, or to visit you, at that time, with any sort of convenience.

BELIEVE

BELIEVE me, my good friend, if *inclination* might have ruled, I had been with you at Harbury many weeks ago. Sure I am, they must be the *cares* of home, and not the *pleasures* of it, that *ever were* sufficient to detain me during the *winter season*. Nor do I think I have an enemy that wishes me more miserable than I have almost constantly found myself ever since the beginning of *it*.

I CANNOT even now fix a time when I can see you; and perhaps it may be deferred till Mr. Miller's place will have received some advantage from the Spring; and in that case I would infallibly see my Lord Guilford's; but I leave this undetermined: and I hope, if you *can* wander from home with any kind of satisfaction, you will do me the justice to believe, that you have no friend alive who will more gladly receive you than myself.

I HAVE papered some rooms this last year, and would willingly have you see them before their colours are vanished; which, I think, will unavoidably be the case of *one*, before a second summer be half concluded.

THUS is beauty as uncertain as either fortune or fame.

I SUPPOSE you have heard there is a citation from Doctors Commons, and a writ of "*Ne exeat*" out against

against Mr. W— for an intrigue with ———. If you have not, be not *precipitate* in spreading the story.—They say, he has fled into France on the occasion.—What a shocking affair is this! so early in life! so extensive, so lasting, so irremediable in its consequences! but,

“ Sic visum Veneri! cui placet *impares*
 “ *Formas atque animos, sub juga ahenae,*
 “ *Servo mittere cum joco!*”

Your misfortunes and mine incline us, almost, to love *all* people that are miserable; but how will the daughters of the Philistines rejoice on the occasion; nay, almost countenance another's loss of virtue, by manifesting their own apparent want of humanity!

THERE is a most admirable piece of allegory on this head in the Female Fables, by Brooks, if I mistake not; to whom the author in his preface acknowledges himself greatly indebted.

I AM truly sorry to understand how much you are alone; I really imagined you were much happier in point of company than myself, as you live in a much politer neighbourhood; amongst persons of genius, learning, and humanity. And happier you are; for however I make a shift to scrape some company

pany around me, they are such as can affect me with little else besides the spleen.

Do not dwell too much on subjects that make you thoughtful; superficial amusements are our point, till some time hence: I am an ill adviser; but I prescribe you the methods which I have found most effectual with myself.

I HAVE not been forgetful of the task that you enjoined me, to give you my observations on the verses which you inclosed.—I will write my sentiments on a separate paper. Do not punish me with silence and suspense concerning you, but write, I can ardently desire what I but little deserve, being,

Your most affectionate friend,

W. S.

LXXII. To the same.

Dear Mr. Jago,

The Leasowes,

Feb. 27, 1753.

I WROTE you some account of myself, and inclosed some trivial criticisms, in a letter I sent you about a fortnight ago, which I hope you have received.—Tom comes now to enquire after your health,

health, and to bring back my "Ode to Colonel Lytelton;" in regard to which, I desire that you will not be sparing of your animadversions. I whispered my difficulties to Mr. Miller at Hagley, how delicate I found the subject, and how hard it was to satisfy either myself or others; in all which points he agreed with me. Nevertheless, having twice broken my *promise* of sending a corrected copy to Sir George, I was obliged to make my peace by a *fresh* one, which, I suppose, I must of necessity perform.—Give me your whole sentiments hereupon, I beseech you; in particular and in general, as a critic and as a friend.—The bad state of spirits which I complained of in my last, for a long time together made me utterly irresolute: every thing occasioned me suspense; and I did nothing with appetite.—This was owing in a great measure to a slow nervous fever, as I have since discovered by many concurrent symptoms. It is now, I think, wearing off by degrees. I seem to anticipate a little of that "vernal delight" which Milton mentions, and thinks

"Able to chase

"All sadness, but despair."

At least, I begin to resume my silly clue of hopes and expectations; which I know, however, *will* not guide me to any thing more satisfactory than before.

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P

I HAVE

I have read scarce any new books this season. Voltaire's new Tragedy was sent me from London; but what has given me the most amusement, has been the "Lettres de Madame de Maintenon." You have probably read them already in English, and then I need not recommend them. The "Life of Lord Bolingbroke" is entirely his *public* life, and the book three parts filled with political remarks.

As to *writing*, I have not attempted it this year and more; nor do I know when I shall again.—However, I would be glad to correct that "Ode to the Dutchess of Somerset," when once I can find in whose hands it is deposited. I was *shown* a very elegant letter of hers, the other day; wherein she asks for it with great politeness: and as it includes nothing but a love of rural life, and such sort of amusements as she herself approves, I shall stand a good chance of having it received with partiality. She lives the life of a *religieuse*. She has *written* my Lady Luxborough a very serious letter of condolence upon the misfortune in her family; and need enough has Lady Luxborough of so unchangeable a friend! for sure nothing could have happened to a person in her situation more *specifically* unfortunate.—Mr. Reynolds has been at Barrels, I hear, and has brought her a machine that goes into a coat-pocket, yet answers the end of "a jack for boots, a reading-desk, a cribbage-board, a pair of snuffers, a ruler, an
" eighteen-

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"eighteen-inch-rule, three pair of nut-cracks, a
"lemon-squeezer, two candlesticks, a piquet-board,
"and the Lord knows what beside."—Can you form
an idea of it? if you can, do you not think it must
give me pain to reflect, that I myself am useless
for *no* sort of purpose, when a paltry bit of wood
can answer so *many*? but, indeed, whilst it *pretends*
to these exploits, it performs nothing *well*; and
therein I agree with it. So true it is, with regard
to me, what I told you long ago,

"Multa & præclara minantem

"Vivere nec recte, nec suaviter!"

WE have a turnpike-bill upon the point of being
brought into the House of Commons; it will con-
vey you about half the way betwixt Birmingham
and Hales, and from thence to Hagley; but, I trust,
there will be a *left-hand* attraction, which will always
make you deviate from the *train-line*.

I should be ashamed to reflect how much I have
dwelt upon *myself* in this letter, but that I seriously
approve of egotism in letters; and were I *now* to do
so, I should not have any other subject. I have
not a single neighbour, that is either fraught with
politeness, literature, or intelligence; much less
have I a tide of spirits to let my invention afloat;
but the less I am able to amuse *you*, the more desirous
am I of your letters; which afford me the truest en-

tainment, even when my spirits are ever so much depressed.

THAT universal cheerfulness which is the lot of some people, persons that you and I may *envy* at the same time that we *despise*, is worth all that either fortune or nature can bestow.

I am, with entire affection,

Yours,

W. SHENSTONE.

LXXIII. To Mr. Graves.

Dear Mr. Graves,

The Leasowes,
Mar. 28, 1753.

I AM vexed to find you have no copy of those verses—I must make a fresh enquiry; and should they happen to accompany this letter, as I fear they will *not*, be so good as to assist me all you can in the way of *hints* and *corrections*—corrections of what *is*, and hints of what *may be*. I do not reckon much upon these verses, or the patronage which you mention; though the Dutchess is a woman of high reputation, and has as much benevolence as any woman upon earth.

I do

I do *not* include the design of visiting Bath as a public place: I have long since given up such schemes of gaiety and expence. I visit *you* and *Mrs. Graves*; at the least, I mean to do so.

INOCULATION is a point on which I never speak a syllable in the way of *pro* or *con*: I mean, not so as to influence particulars; for, in the general, I esteem it both right and salutary; and even *right* because we *find* it *salutary*.

I do not know whether I could not bear the *dishonour* of friends or relations better than their *death*. —It must afford one no small satisfaction to give them one's affection and assistance under every frailty to which human nature is exposed; at least, so long as they are true to friendship. It is Mr. Whistler's opinion, as well as mine. But Mr. ———'s case is altogether different; and I make no question that he thinks as you do upon the occasion.

POOR Danvers's death affects me more than you would perhaps imagine. If you remember, I was at M—— when the scheme of his going abroad was in agitation. I think how this event must affect Mrs. T—, whose concern will not be *lessened* by her long separation from him. I dare say he reckoned upon his relations here as his *best estate*, whatever he might gain elsewhere; and, no doubt, the

hope of retiring amongst them has been a constant spur to his diligence.—The event was always uncertain, and has proved at last unfortunate; yet, as Melmoth says very justly, “The course of human affairs requires that we should act with vigour upon very precarious contingencies.”—I desire you would give me a sight of the Latin inscription.

I THINK it was the Gentleman's Magazine in which I was shewn your verses.

I HAVE a particular and lively idea of your place; though I do not remember to have seen even such parts of a scene as I have united together in my imagination. I cannot think otherwise than that the front-door opens here, the garden-door there, the stream runs in this place, &c. &c.

“Hac ibat Simois, hæc est Sigeia tellus.”

THE sight of the place could not impress my imagination more deeply; though the impression I am to acquire will hardly leave one line of my present one remaining. *Cabbage-garden ornée* is very high burlesque, and affects the improvements of your friend too nearly.

LET me know in what manner Mrs. Graves and you are drawn. Be as particular as you please.

I COULD

I could not be clear from your letter whether you had received the box or not. That, together with the tallies, lay on the table before me while I wrote to you last; and went with my letter to Birmingham.—Pray satisfy me directly whether you received them.—They are trifles indeed; but, as they acquit me of my promise, they are virtually of consequence.

Mr. Whistler has not answered a letter which I sent him above two months ago: nay, I think, a quarter of a year.

You are rich.—I have only to wish the continuance of your riches, with some diminution of your fatigue. And yet the most laborious man in the world is, I am fully assured, more happy than the *lazier*.

“THE Rival Brothers” has some of Dr. Young’s affectations; and I question if the moral be absolutely true—at least, Mr. Addison is in some measure against it: but, on the whole, I think it a noble Tragedy; abounding as much with refined sentiments and elevated expressions; as “The Gamester” and “The Earl of Essex” are deficient in *both*.

My verses are not yet sent to Sir George Lyttelton; I start new difficulties, and cannot make them to

my mind: yet have promised him a copy, and disappointed him thrice; and can hardly defer it much longer without great offence.

I HAVE scarce been twenty yards from home this winter. Last night I visited one of my neighbours; and what with wine, sitting up late, a perfect flux of discourse, and a return home through the dark, found myself *vertiginous* before I was aware. Never did Prior's manly description, "I drank, I liked it "not, &c." seem so natural to me as it does to-day. I am absolutely vile in my own sight, and I abhor myself in dust and ashes. I was *never* so intoxicated as not to know what I said, or to talk mere nonsense; and yet how many things could I wish unsaid that I let fall last night!

We are going to add two new bells to our present set of six; to have a turnpike road from Hagley to Birmingham, through Hales; and to emerge a little from our obscurity. I am, dear Sir, with compliments to Mrs. Graves,

Ever most affectionately yours,

W. SHENSTONE.

LXXIV. To the same, with Observations on Arms,
Inscriptions, &c.

Dear Mr. Graves,

The Leaflowes,
July 15. 1753.

I SEND you my Ode, as I sent it to the Dutchesse
some weeks ago. Why I pitched upon one read-
ing sooner than another, I will not now explain:
nor will I trouble you to make any fresh remarks
upon it at present; only, when you happen to read
it over at your leisure, if any thing occurs to you
that would tend to perfect it, I would beg you oc-
casionally to make some memorandums. I have not
yet received an answer; but, as I accompanied the
verses with a letter, I suppose I shall receive one
in return. I also added, to fill a blank space in my
paper-book, a poem which I call "The Vista;"
and which you may perhaps recollect: how pro-
perly I know not, for I had the benefit of no person's
judgement or advice.

LORD Dudley made Mr. Dolman a present of a
piece of plate, a large cup, in consideration of his
sister's being at Broom about half a year. There
was on it, one supporter awkwardly enough hold-
ing up the coronet in his paw, and from the co-
ronet proceeded a label, with "Amoris ergo Dud-
"ley." I do not know who was the manager, or
whence he had the inscription; but I think from
2
Dr.

Dr. H.— This is *elegant* and *enough*. Nevertheless, as there may be some convenience in dazzling the eyes of the people where I dwell, and as *such* eyes as theirs are not to be dazzled, and hardly *struck*, by *elegance* alone, I chose the method that was most *magnificent*.—I wish they are not invidious enough to say, that *his* arms are engraved there for want of some of my *own*: so I would not be long before I remove their notable suggestion.—I have truly so low an opinion of arms since they became purchasable by money, and since the present unlimited use of them, that, were I to find a coat to my name in the office which I did not like, I would not use it; but substitute what was more agreeable; yet some sort of *right* or *claim* is requisite to satisfy one's delicacy with an opinion of *property*; and indeed to fix one's *choice*, where one has the whole furniture of the universe for *its* object.—After all, the vulgar are more struck with arms than any thing; “*stupet in titulis & imaginibus*,” and, I believe, there were near two hundred people gathered round Lady Luxborough's landeau at Birmingham, and declaring her arms to be very *noble*, or otherwise.—I do not, therefore, chuse to employ a vulgar *mind* about this matter.—Were you to go to London, I should gladly solicit you; or if you have any friend you could write to in town, to search the office; for really I have none that I like *for the purpose*. It will not cost above a couple of shillings.—I will send you a draught
of

of the lid of my standish when it arrives—for I really do not know what Mr. Hylton will put upon it; I find, he consults with Dr. B—, my Lord's physician.—“*De Dudley*” would run most abominably, and “*Baro Dudley*” may be authorized by the frequent practice of Maittaire.—If it is inscribed “*Dudley*” alone, I can add the rest if I should hereafter think proper; and I wish it may be so.

My verses to the Colonel are not yet transcribed.

I THINK the Latin inscription to your brother very elegant; and I should not care to have any part of it omitted—I would, by all means, have this little history of his life perpetuated—“*His saltem, &c.*” And were you to put it into English, it would be too long for an inscription; unless you were, by means of a printed elegy with notes, or any other such method, to produce the same effect; and then you might make the epitaph as short as you pleased.—After all, the *first* method is perhaps as eligible. When the affair is nearer a conclusion, I should be glad to be of any service.—I will think, and write again about it.

AND now, having spoke to such matters as have been the subject of our late correspondence, I am at liberty to diversify my letter as I may.—I should be glad to know in your next, whether you have

heard of late from Mr. Whistler; and whether he is confined at home as usual by his mother's state of health. I almost despair of ever seeing him again at The Leasowes, though there is hardly any pleasure I so much covet as that of surprizing him with the *alterations* I have made, and the *artifices* I have purchased, during the five years since he was in Shropshire: add to this, the several *acquaintances* I have formed which he would like, and the amusing visits I could pay hereabouts with freedom.—I do not know whether you saw Mr. Davenport and his family at Bath this spring. He is laying out his environs; and I am by appointment to go over the week after next. He has also a painter at this time taking views round his house, which is one of the most magnificent in our county; yet I never leave home but with reluctance. I really *love* no place so well; and it is a great favour in me to allot any one a week of my *summer*.—Add to this, that my constitution requires nursing; and I am most *happy* where I am most *free*. It is in vain to say, they *allow* you all freedom, where you cannot allow it *yourself*. For this reason, I never more enjoy myself, than I do at The Grange; and yet this to some may appear paradoxical.

I YESTERDAY embellished my chalybeate spring.—The inscription that is *cut* on the stone is as follows, viz.

“ FONS

"FONS FERRUGINEVS."

"DIVAE QVAE SECESSV ISTO

"FRVI CONCEDIT

"SALVTI S."

Yet I question whether some of the following be not preferable; if they are, I beg you will tell me. One shilling and six-pence produces the alteration:

"FONS FERRUGINEVS."

"DIVAE PER QVAM LICET

"HOC SECESSV FRVI, &c.

"SAL. &c."

or,

"DIVAE PER QVAM LATEBRAE

"QVAEVIS OBLECTANT

"&c."

or,

"DIVAE LOCORVM OMNIVM

"COMMENDATRICI, &c.

or,

"DIVAE NIMIRVM RYSTICAE.

"SALVTI SACER."

or,

"DIVAE CUI DEBETVR

"LOCORVM OMNIVM AMOENITAS

"&c."

or,

"DIVAE PER QVAM LICET

"INORNATO RVRE LAETARI."

BELIEVE

BELIEVE me ever, with my best compliments to
Mrs. Graves,

Your most obliged

and most affectionate servant,

W. SHENSTONE

LXXV. To Mrs. Jago.

Dear Mr. Jago,

The Leasowes,
Jan. 29, 1754.

I AM at a loss how to begin this letter.—I will not, however, after the usual way, give you a tedious list of *apologies* in the front of it. Some account of my long silence you will find dispersed throughout the letter; and as for what is deficient, I will depend upon your friendship.

THERE has not been a person here, since you left me, of whom I could obtain the least intelligence concerning you. And as an enquiry by the post was my only obvious method, I do acknowledge myself to blame, notwithstanding all the excuses that I can make.

AMIDST that conflux of visitants whom I received this last season, I was hardly once so happy as I
was

was in *your* company: I was the happier in feeling you so; and, if you remember, I took notice at the time, how little your vivacity was impaired in comparison of my own. If I was *then* but a dull companion, guess whether solitude and winter were likely to make me a better correspondent. That vein of gaiety and humour, which you were once so partial as to discover in my letters, will scarce appear there any more: not even to the eyes of the most partial friend I have. Should you deny what I assert, and impute it to a fit of spleen, yet you may allow that it will scarce enliven any letter that I write in winter. Friendship still remains! Friendship, like the root of some perennial flower, even *then* perhaps gathers strength in secret; that it may afford a better display of its colours in the spring.

I do not pretend this to be an adequate apology. I know, my dearest friend, that you both like to see and hear from me: it proves, however, that you have no great loss either of my letters or my company.

I AM, as the phrase is, deeply penetrated by the civilities of your Mr. Miller. He took a short dinner with me once this season, dropping Sir George at Mr. P—'s. He could not have pleased me better. Here he happened to meet Mr. Lyttelton and Captain Whood. He afterwards breakfasted here,

and

and in general seemed glad of every occasion to bring me the genteelst company. To him I owe Miss Banks and Lord Temple. Can you think that Radway now, as well as Harbury, has no attractions for me? You know me too well; but I have not truly such a state of health as to dare to be from home. Friends will say, "you may be as free at our houses as your own, &c." and they will mean as they say; but if you cannot make *yourself* so, what is all this to the purpose?

I CANNOT give you a detail of what has passed with me since I saw you. Lord Dudley, with myself, made one visit to Lord Plymouth's. We met Mr. and Mrs. Winnington.—We took a trip to Mr. Vernon's, where we found Mr. Coventry and other company. The impressions I received from them would afford subject for *conversation* betwixt you and me; but I must not assign too much of my paper to that purpose.

LORD Plymouth's piece of water should have been a serpentine river. I could give you strong reasons.—I think my Lord such a character as will make a reputable figure in life—*beloved* he is, and *must* be at first sight.—Lady Plymouth is the most amiable of women; and, of all the world, the properest person that my Lord could have chosen. The plan for their house I think right; supposing it right to con-

tinue

tinue it where it is. The park is capable of some considerable beauties. Lord Plymouth has been once here since, and talks of causing me to come, and design for his environs.—I seem to be highly in his favour.—I hope some time to meet you there.

My Ode, after an astonishing delay, was presented to the Dutches of Somerset. It produced me two genteel letters from her Grace. I am well satisfied with the event, for some reasons which I will one day give you—none of moment.—Soon after this, Doddsley pressed me to contribute, as amply as I pleased, to a fourth volume of his Miscellanies. I at first meant to do so pretty largely; I then changed my mind, and sent only some little pieces. Part of these were my own; part Mr. Whistler's, Mr. Graves's, and some accidental pieces of others, which I found in my bureau.—I purposed to send something of yours too; of *myself*, if I was *hurried*; else, not without your consent. What I thought of was, your Linnets. Last week he writes me word, that the town will now be too much engrossed by the business of elections; and that he does not proceed this winter.—So that we shall now, you see, have time to meet, or write upon the subject.

Mr. Graves sent me the inclosed little fable, for Doddsley, if I approved it.—I made some alterations, and sent it.—Return it to me, if you please.—It

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is pretty; but the inscription must be "To a
"Friend."

SOME correspondence I have had this winter with Mr. Hylton, about toys and trinkets which he gets done for me in London. He is by far a better *friend* and *correspondent* than a *poet*. Should you take a trip to town, he would be quite *proud* to see you.

I AM now, like the rest of the world, perusing Sir Charles Grandison—I know not whether that world *joins* me, in preferring Clarissa. The author wants the art of *abridgement* in every thing that he has written, yet I am much his admirer.

MY dear friend! cherish and preserve your own vivacity, and let not this phlegmatic epistle impair it. If occasion offers, call on me for my *own* sake; and believe you have not alive a more affectionate friend.

W. SHENSTONE.

LXXVI. To Mr. GRAVES, on the Alternations of
Pleasure and Pain.

The Leasowes,

Dear Mr. Graves,

April 19, 1754.

IT is a long, long time, according to the computation of friendship, since I had the pleasure of a line from you; and I write chiefly to remind you of it, not with any hopes of affording you the amusement of a single minute. In truth, I have not spirits for it. The severity, the duration, the solitude, of this winter have well-nigh exhausted them.—The succession, the regular succession, of pain and pleasure becomes every day more clear to me. It begins to seem as ordinary as the course of day and night. Thus my last summer was the most amusing I ever saw; my winter the most disagreeable—allow me to except one only: I mean, that ever-mournful winter which robbed me of my dearest relation. Sometimes this pain and pleasure are contrasted within the compass of a day; sometimes in different weeks, &c. &c. However, do not think me superstitious; there is hardly a person that is *less* so. Yet I am firmly persuaded of the alternation, either in the mind, or in the events themselves. My summer, I said before, was highly entertaining; my winter rendered equally disagreeable, by a long-continued squabble amongst our principal parishioners,

and by the death of my best-beloved and the most accomplished of my relations, M— D—. She risked going to London for the sake of finding something *new*; was seized with the small-pox, and died in all her bloom.—The natural consequence which we should draw from observations of this sort is, equanimity; “*æquam memento rebus, &c.*” and again, “*sperat infestis, metuit secundis, &c.*” Enough of this, which I should not mention but that the fact itself strikes me continually more and more; and were I to mark the pleasing and unpleasing parts of my existence in an almanac, as the Romans did their *Fasti* and *Nefasti*, I know not if, at the year's end, the black and white marks would not nearly balance each other.

I HAVE bought “Hogarth's Analysis:” it is really entertaining; and has, in some measure, adjusted my notions with regard to beauty in general. For instance, were I to draw a shield, I could give you reasons from hence why the shape was pleasing or disagreeable. I would have you *borrow* and read it.

GRANDISON I cannot think equal to *Clarissa*; though, were merit in this age to be preferred, the author of it deserves a bishopric.

JACO

Jaco has been fortunate for once, but the value of his livings must be exaggerated in the newspapers.

If Mr. Whistler would give me a visit in the height of my season this year, I should look upon it as one of the most pleasing events that could happen to the remainder of my life; and I would not presume to hope that fate would ever allow me a repetition of it.

My love of toys is not quite exhausted—I have purchased, or rather renovated, some that are both rich and beautiful, though short of what I meant them. I have amused myself with designing little ornaments this winter, some of which may turn to account, under the management of some Birmingham mechanic. —To achieve *ease*, in that season, is the most that I can *hope*; and it is more than I often *obtain*.

Excuse this worthless letter; which *must* cost you money, as they tell me franks are useless. I could not avoid some uneasiness upon reflecting how long you have been silent. Present my best compliments to Mrs. Graves; and pay a tribute of one single half-sheet to that affection with which I am ever

Yours,

W. SHENSTONE.

LXXVII. To

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LXXVII. To the same, on the Death of Mr.
WHISTLER.

The Leafowes,

June 7, 1754.

Dear Mr. Graves,

THE melancholy account of our dear friend Whistler's death was conveyed to me, at the same instant, by yours and by his brother's letter. I have written to his brother this post; though I am very ill able to write upon the subject, and would willingly have waved it longer, but for decency. The triumvirate, which was the greatest happiness and the greatest pride of my life, is broken! The fabric of an ingenuous and disinterested friendship has lost a noble column! yet it may, and will, I trust, endure till one of us be laid as low. In truth, one can so little satisfy one's self with what we say upon such sad occasions, that I made three or four essays before I could endure what I had written to his brother.—Be so good as excuse me to him as well as you can, and establish me in the good opinion of him and Mr. Walker.

Poor Mr. Whistler! how do all our little stripes and bickerments appear to us at this time! yet we may with comfort reflect, that they were not of a sort that touched the *vitals* of our friendship; and I may say, that we fondly loved and esteemed each other,

other, of necessity—"Tales animas oportuit esse con-
"cordes." Poor Mr. Whistler! not a single acquaint-
ance have I made, not a single picture or curiosity
have I purchased, not a single embellishment have I
given to my place, since he was last here, but I have
had his approbation and his amusement in my eye.
I will assuredly inscribe my larger urn to his memo-
ry; nor shall I pass it without a pleasing melanco-
ly during the remainder of my days. We have each
of us received a pleasure from *his* conversation, which
no other conversation can afford us at our present
time of life.

ADIEU! my dear friend! may our remembrance
of the person we have lost be the strong and ever-
lasting cement of our affection! Assure Mr. John
Whistler of the regard I have for him, upon his *own*
account, as well as his brother's. Write to me;
directly if you have opportunity. Whether you have
or no, believe me to be ever most affectionately yours,

W. SHENSTONE.

I BEG my compliments to Mrs. Graves.

LXXVIII. To the same.

Dear Mr. Graves,

The Leasowes,

July 15, 1754.

THE particulars relating to our poor friend's departure occasioned me much concern, and indeed some tears: yet as *those* particulars are what one covets to hear, and the melancholy which they produce is never unmixed with pleasure, I think myself much obliged to you for the care you took to convey them. It is possible, the letters I wrote to you and Mr. J. Whittler might appear too tender from a mere friend of the deceased; but there is a sympathy betwixt friends, which is not always found amongst relations; nor does *kindred* imply *friendship* a whit more than *friendship* does *kindred*. It is not many weeks ago, that I had a bill filed against me in Chancery by young D—, the only near relation I have by the mother's side, and the next in lineal succession to my share of the Penn's estate.—Do not let this surprize you—I believe the affair will be accommodated.—He only wanted to procure a division of the Harborough estate at a large expence, which might be better adjusted without any; in other words, to run his head against a stone-wall, that he might have a chance of causing it to tumble upon *me*. Would you consent that I should suffer him to have the mansion-house at Harborough thrown into his lot? Were I so to do, I could make it ad-

vantageous to myself, and the dispute were at an end; but I have a kind of romantic veneration for that *place and family*; which, if you remember, I have expressed in one of my best elegies*.

PRAY what will become of our letters to Mr. Whistler? As I am not conscious of any thing dishonourable in mine (and I am *sure* I may say the same of yours), methinks I could wish that they might not be destroyed. It is from a few letters of my own or others alone, accidentally preserved, that I am able to recollect what I have been doing since I was born.

I met, when I was last at Barfels, a surgeon of Bath, whose name, I think, was Cleland. He knew your name and place; but, I find, was not personally acquainted with you.—I am glad enough to hear that your place gets into vogue. It is, I think, what you should *chuse*, upon all accounts. Let the beauty of the place guide them to the merits of its owner. I have often thought, myself, that were a person to live at The Leafowes, of more merit than myself, and a few degrees more worldly prudence, he could scarce want opportunities to procure his own advancement. My rural embellishments are perhaps more considerable than yours, but then the vicinity of Bath might occasion you a greater conflux.—Your unexpensive illuminations please me highly.

* Elegy xv.

I have

I have purposed these many years to purchase a set of tin-lamps, of about four-pence a-piece, to stick against trees, and to use upon occasion in my cop-pice; or rather in my grove, where some of the water-falls would not fail to shew delightfully.

You asked me about Jago's preferment. The living *last given* him by the Bishop of Worcester is, I believe, near an hundred pounds a year. With this, he has Harbury, of about fifty; and Chesherton, a sort of chapel of ease, about forty; in the *whole*, therefore, about a hundred and ninety: but then he is obliged to keep a curate; and what I think yet worse is, that he cannot make it *convenient* to *live* at his new situation, which is a pretty one.

I HAVE had some visitants this season; indeed as many, and as considerable, as such a sort of season could afford me. A Scotch peer called upon me in his way through Birmingham: his title was D——. He seemed to have a very clear head, a very polite and easy manner, and all the refinement of true taste, *without* the warmth or appetite.—I could not help thinking him, on many accounts, characteristic of the Scottish nation.

WOULD to God I could see you and Mrs. Graves here this summer! I have the same wish it may be

my lot to visit you next autumn. Be assured, I purpose

I EXPECT Doddsley every week. He will, I am convinced, be for publishing his Miscellany next winter. Would Mr. W—, think you, agree, that you and I should be allowed to publish such of poor Mr. Whistler's papers there, as we judged were most likely to do credit to his memory?

ADIEU! dear Mr. Graves. Let us reconcile our affections to the ordinary events of life; and let us adopt my friend Jago into our second triumvirate. I am, however, always, with peculiar attachment, yours,

W. SHENSTONE.

My best compliments to Mrs. Graves.

P. S. SINCE I wrote the foregoing, I have had Mr. Davenport of Davenport-house, with all his family.—His brother, the clergyman, remembered you by your picture.—His wife is the finest person, &c. I have seen here, except Lady Aylebury—in- genious, easy-behaved, and of an excellent temper.—They come to Bath in a fortnight.

SINCE that time, Sir George Lyttelton, Mr. Lyttelton, and Miss Lyttelton.—Sir George thinks some alterations requisite in my verses, to which I cannot easily bring myself to conform—but must.

I LOOK upon my scheme of embellishing my farm as the only lucky one I ever pursued in my life.—My place now brings the world home to me, when I have too much indolence to go forth in quest of it.

LXXIX. To the same, on hearing that his Letters to Mr. WHISTLER were destroyed.

Dear Mr. Graves,

The Leafowes,

Oct. 23, 1754.

IT is certainly some argument of a *peculiarity* in the esteem I bear you, that I feel a readiness to acquaint you with *more* of my foibles than I care to trust with any other person. I believe nothing shews us more plainly either the different *degrees* or *kinds* of regard that we entertain for our several friends (I may also add the *difference* of their *characters*), than the ordinary style and tenor of the letters we address to them.

I CONFESS to you, that I am considerably mortified by Mr. John W—'s conduct in regard to my letters to his brother; and, rather than they should have been so unnecessarily destroyed, would have given more money than it is allowable for me to mention with *decency*. I look upon my letters as some of my *chef-d'œuvres*; and, could I be supposed to have the least pretensions to propriety of style or sentiment,

ment, I should imagine it must appear, principally, in my letters to his brother, and one or two more friends. I considered them as the records of a *friendship* that will be always *dear* to me, and as the *history* of my *mind* for these twenty years last past. The amusement I should have found in the perusal of them would have been altogether innocent; and I would gladly have preserved them, if it were only to explain those which I shall preserve of his brother's. Why he should allow either *me* or *them* so very little weight as not to *consult* me with regard to them, I can by no means conceive. I suppose it is not *un-customary* to return them to the surviving friend. I had no answer to the letter which I wrote Mr. J. W—. I received a ring from him; but as I thought it an inadequate memorial of the friendship which his brother had for me, I gave it to my servant the moment I received it; at the same time I have a neat standish, on which I caused the lines Mr. W— left with it to be inscribed, and which appears to me a much more agreeable remembrancer.

I HAVE read your new production with pleasure; and as this letter begins with a confession of foibles, I will own, that through mere laziness I have sent you back your copy in which I have made some erasements, instead of giving you my reasons on which those erasements were founded. Truth is, it seems to me to want mighty few variations from what is

now

now the present text; and that, upon one more perusal, you will be able to give it as much perfection as you mean it to have. And yet, did I suppose you would insert it in Doddsley's Collection, as I see no reason you have to the contrary, I would take any pains about it that you should desire me. I must beg another copy, at your leisure.

I SHOULD like the inscription you mention upon a real stone-urn, which you purchase very reasonable at Bath: but you must not risque it upon the vase you mention, on any account whatever.

Now I mention Bath, I must acquaint you, that I have received intelligence from the younger Doddsley, that his brother is now there, and that none of the papers I sent him are yet *sent to press*; that he expects his brother home about the fourth or fifth of November, when he proceeds with his publication. Possibly you may go to Bath whilst he is there, and, if so, may chuse to have an interview.

I SHALL send two or three little pieces of my own, in hopes that you will adjust the reading, and return them as soon as you conveniently can. All I can send to-night is this "Ode to Memory." I shall in the last place desire your opinion as to the manner of *placing* what is sent. The first pages of his Miscellany must be already fixed. I think to propose

propose ours for the last; but as to the *order*, it will depend entirely upon you.

ADIEU! in other words, God bless you!—I have company at the table all the time I am writing. Your ever most affectionate

W. SHENSTONE.

LXXX. To Mr. JAGO.

The Leasowes,

Dear Mr. Jago, June 16, 1754.

WERE I to pronounce my sentence upon the long suspension of our correspondence, I should impute the blame of it, in almost *equal* measure, to *yourself* and to *me*. To *you*, for an omission of the letter you *promised* me when last in town; to *me*, for waiting in expectation of it, and for neglecting to do *justice* to the sentiments of my heart on the occasion of your late preferment. Great were the hopes I had indeed conceived, that your increase of revenue had been accompanied with a place of residence which was more *to your mind* than that where you at present abide; but I do not find by any accounts that you purpose to leave Harbury: for which, no doubt, you have reasons which I do not yet penetrate, but which may demand my assent the moment you discover them. I have but little to say of the life I have led since you received some account

count of me from Mr. Hylton in London. The Winter, or at least its *ministers*, continued to tyrannize during the *minority* of Spring; and the Spring has alike been slow in giving up the reins to Summer. Of consequence, I seem in a sort of middle state, betwixt a dull half-animated grub and an insignificant loco-motive fly. Neither in the *one* state or *other* am I of the least importance; but, from the advances which I have *already* made, you are *somewhat* the more likely to find me in your garden. About a fortnight ago I received a line or two from our intimate acquaintance and school-fellow Mr. Hall. It was brought me by Sir Edward Boughton's gardener; a fellow of good taste, to whom Mr. Hall desired I would cause The Leafowes to be shewn. I find you have delighted Mrs. Hall by some alterations which you propose for their environs, and which they thoroughly resolve to put in execution. When I come over into Warwickshire, as I hope to do soon, I shall be very glad to make them a visit in your company. My spirits, though far from good, are better in the main than they were in winter, and on some peculiar days are raised as high as to *alacrity*; *very* seldom higher, seldom so high.

You must (from hence at least) take matters in the order or rather *disorder* in which they occur. Mr. Miller I saw on Wednesday last in Lady Lyttelton's coach, who stopped two minutes at my gate

on

on her return from London. I enquired concerning you; but could gather no intelligence.—Mr. Hylton, who is now in Warwickshire (if he have not strolled to London), has been with me several months this summer. He is adding a room or two to his place, which lies very near me; and purposes to reside there as soon as it is finished. The situation is not void of beauties; but, if you will pardon the vanity, must veil its bonnet to mine. I have heard of planting hollies, pyracanthas, and other berry-bearing greens, to attract those Blackbirds which you have so effectually celebrated: it shall be my ambition to plant good neighbours; and, what with Lord Dudley and his exotics, Mr. Hylton with his fossils, and myself with my *ferme ornée*, is there not some room to expect that we may attract the tasters this way? but first we must take some care to *advertise* them where their treasures lie.—Another day is passed, and Mr. Miller, &c. has again been with me, and waked me out of a sound sleep to breakfast.—He mentions with what reluctance he *left* a surveyor at Radway, employed in taking plans of the field of battle near Edge-hill. This he purposes to enrich with a number of anecdotes, gleaned from his neighbourhood; which must probably render it extremely entertaining; and surely Edge-hill fight was never more unfortunate to the nation, than it was lucky for Mr. Miller! He prints, together with this plan, another sheet of Radway Castle. I approve his design. He will, by this

means, turn every bank and hillock of his estate there, if not into *classical*, at least into *historical* ground.

I HAVE done mighty little about my grounds since last winter. As indolence has on *many* occasions contributed to *impair* my finances, it is but just that it should sometimes contribute to *restore* them. Yet I am not quite destitute of something new for your amusement.

Of late I have neither *read* nor *written* a syllable. What pleased me last was "Hogarth's Analysis." I expect Doddsley down every week; and as he will spend a few days with me, I could wish you were to meet him. His genius is truly poetical, and his sentiments altogether liberal and ingenious.

I AM, at present, a surveyor of roads; employed in repairing my lane to the turnpike. How glad should I be to meet you, and to shew you its *beauties*! to shew you Mr. Hylton's new series of coins;—his *designs* as well as his *performances* at Lappa!—how glad should I be to see you! yea, I would hardly fail to return with you to Harbury; were you to add this one obligation. I left Mr. Miller in doubt whether he would not see me at Radway some time next week. Evil and capricious health (the particulars of which would make a detail of no importance) destroys all my punctuality, and bids me promise with *fear*. You, I trust, are
most

mostly at home; and were you to be at Shitterfield, I would follow you without reluctance. So, with hopes to see you shortly either in Warwickshire or Shropshire, I relinquish the subject.

I HAVE reserved a very melancholy subject for the last. May you, and Mr. Graves, and myself, stand firm to support the fabric of friendship, which has lost a very beautiful column in poor Mr. Whistler! he died of a fore-throat, which in a few days time turned to an inward mortification.—I will say no more on the occasion: very affecting has it been to me.—God preserve your life, your happiness, and your friendships! and may you ever be assured of that with which I am, dear Sir,

Your most affectionate humble servant,

W. SHENSTONE.

SHALL I beg a line from you, as soon as may be?
—I do, most earnestly.

I AM given to understand that I may expect a visit this summer from the Bishop of Worcester, from Lord Ward, Lord Coventry, and Lord Guefnay.—It may be so; but honours of *this sort*, which would formerly have affected me, perhaps too deeply, have now lost much of their wonted poignancy. Can such persons bear to see the scenes *riant*, and to find the *owner* gloomy? Let *them*, as they are *able*, make

my circumstances more affluent; and they shall find the *reflection* in *my* face and in *their* reception; but, as this will never be, it is no compliment to declare, that an hour or two's interview with you or Mr. Graves outweighs the arrival of the whole British Peerage.

SOMETHING else I have to say. Young Pixell last winter told me, that the organist of Worcester had set your Ode (The Blackbirds) to music; that he *liked* the musick; and that he would sing it next evening at the Birmingham concert. I have not heard him mention it *since*, and I *forgot* to enquire; But, if you happen to have the notes, I should be glad if you would inclose them for me.

I HAVE been of late much bent upon the encrease of *horns* in this neighbourhood.—Do not interpret me *perversely*; I mean French-horns only. My Lord Dudley has had a person to teach two of his servants—nothing—at my instigation; but your old acquaintance Maurice, *who lives at the corner of my coppice*, will exceed them in a week by means of a good ear. I have borrowed a horn for him. Adieu!

LXXXI. To C—W—, Esq.

Dear Mr. W—,

July 6, 1754.

YOU do me justice in believing that I am truly sorry you have not been well. A degree or two of regularity more than what you have already will, I fancy, restore your health and my satisfaction; and I beg you will afford me the earliest account of your recovery.

I CONSIDERED Master W—'s visit as an absolute engagement, and remained at home in constant expectation of him for a fortnight together.—I am, however, not sorry, for his own sake, that he is gone to Oxford, especially as you seem to have an assurance of its proving advantageous. Pray assure him of my earnest wishes for his happiness, and that The Leasowes will be always at his service, whenever, through the fickleness of human nature, he thinks proper to give up a Muse for a Water-nymph.

I EXPECT Mr. Hylton daily.—He was last week in London, and is now, I believe, at Coventry.—He will probably visit you before he comes into this country.—He talked of it when he left me.—I am obliged to be brief.

POST-WOMAN waits for me, "multa gemens."
Doddley is the man for your purpose—He has, with

good genius, a liberal turn of mind.—I expect him to spend a few days here every week.—I will, if he returns through Warwickshire, occasion him to call upon you; but you know he is often lame with the gout, and will hardly be able to make any long digression.

: Your case is exactly mine.—You say, you cannot bear wrongs with patience, but you can sleep and forget them.—So can I—so do I.—Did I never tell you (if not, I do so now) that indolence will, in a thousand instances, give one all the advantages of philosophy? and pray, if you call me lazy any more, take care that you do not use an expression by way of disparagement, which I consider as the highest honour. I am a fool, however, for discovering my secret. What a number of compliments might you have made me unwittingly!

"Tacitus pasci si posset corvus, haberet

"Plus dapis, & rixæ minus invidiæque."

HAD I time, I could comfort you under your ill-usage, by discovering to you the similitude of my own situation.

Excuse this scrawl; accept my compliments; carry them to Mrs. and Miss W—; and believe me ever your obliged and most obedient humble servant,

W. SHENSTONE

LXXXII. To

LXXXII. To Mr. Jago, on their Contribution to
DODSLEY'S Miscellanies.

The Ladies,

Dear Mr. Jago,

Jan. 22, 1755.

I AM sure you must be puzzled how to account for my silence, after the honour you have done me by your verses, and the request you made that I would write. — I am also as much at a loss how to give a proper weight to my apology. To say I have been ill, would perhaps imply too much; when I would only allude to that state of heaviness and dejection which is so frequently my lot at this time of the year; and which renders me both *averse* to writing, and utterly dissatisfied with every thing that I do write.

Is at any time my head grew a little less confused than ordinary, I was obliged to devote my attention to the affair in which I had so *foolishly* involved myself with Doddsley. You are unable to conceive what vexation it has given me: I could not endure to disappoint him: of consequence, it has been my lot to study the delicacies of poetry when my brain was not sufficient to indite a piece of common prose; but as the *mouse* (by which I mean my own performances) will so soon make its ridiculous appearance; it were totally impolitic in me to expatiate on the labours of the *mountain*. — The first letter I received from you

left me greatly dissatisfied. I was then to send D— my *final* instructions in a post or two.—You took little notice of any query I made; and intimated a disapprobation, which agreed *too well* with my own internal sentiments.—I knew not but you were *angry* at the *liberties* I had taken; though I could have suppressed any single paper which I had then conveyed to London.—Little did I *then* imagine that it was in my power to have protracted the affair till *now*. Had that been the case, I should have troubled you with repeated embassies; for I abhor the tediousness of the post, and my servants do little at this time of the year that is of more importance than their master's poetry.

Your next letter convinced me that you had taken no offence; and so far I was happy: but then I wanted to have your Goldfinches as correct as your Blackbirds; there were *some* things I wished you to alter; and others in regard to which I was desirous to speak my *sentiments*. Add to this, my own *verses*, with which I was infinitely more dissatisfied. Why then did I not write?—The true reason was, that I was pressed by D— to send conclusions every post; and though I have had all this leisure (as it *happens*) since you wrote, I never could depend upon more than the space of a day or two. Besides, criticisms in the way of letter are extremely tedious and dissatisfactory; insomuch, that I am thoroughly

thoroughly determined never to print any thing for the future, unless I have the company of my friends when I send to the press. Hurried as I then was, I sent up your two copies, and what I proposed for him of my own, with a kind of *discretionary* power to select the best readings. How you would approve of this measure I knew not; but I had this to plead in my behalf, that D— was a person of taste *himself*; that he had, as I imagined, many learned friends to assist him; that his *interest* was concerned in the perfection of his Miscellany; and that I submitted my own pieces to the same judgement.

AFTER all, I am but indifferently satisfied with the present state of these contributions. D— writes just so much as he deems *necessary* in the way of business, and passes by a thousand points in my letters which deserve an answer. His last acquaints me, that he has spent a whole day in the arrangement of what I have sent him; and that he purposes to send me *proof-sheets* before the close of this week, desiring I would send them back by the return of the post. Whether they arrive on Saturday or on Monday, I can keep them till the Thursday following.

AND this brings me, in the last place, to the main purpose of this letter.—It is a request on which I lay great stress; and which you must not refuse me upon

upon almost any consideration. I beg, in short, that you would promise me the favour of your company on Monday (or even Tuesday) next, if possible; and let us jointly fix the readings of *your* pieces, of my *own*, and those of our common *friends*.—You will immediately comprehend the *expediency* of this; now, in particular, that our names are to appear. *Some* alterations I think *necessary* in your Goldfinches, and there are two or three stanzas which I think you might improve.—Nevertheless, I will not pretend that this journey is so *requisite* upon your *own* account as *mine*; and will recommend it upon no other footing than the pleasure you will receive by the obligation which you will confer.

I *thought* to have concluded here; but, as an envelope is now become altogether necessary, have a temptation to proceed which I did not see before.

It is now become Friday the twenty-fourth of January. The packets I send, and the request that I make upon so *little* warning, will, at first, astonish you.—Unforeseen interruptions would not suffer me to dispatch my courier sooner.—What then remains, but that I endeavour to adjust this affair agreeably to its *present* circumstances?

You will readily conceive, from what you observe in my packets, how desirable your company is to

me at this juncture. Supposing it then in your power to come over on Monday, Tuesday, or even Wednesday, I am inclined to believe you will. Supposing it not so, I can foresee you will not have leisure to satisfy my queries by the return of the bearer: and what I would next propose is, that you would either suffer me to send again to you betwixt this time and Thursday next; or that you would yourself dispatch a purpose-messenger, and allow me to pay for his journey.—In either of these latter cases, I am sure you so well know the nature of my present irresolution, that you will endeavour to afford me all the assistance you are able.

ADIEU! my dear friend! and depend upon my best services on every possible occasion.

I am ever your most affectionate

and most obedient servant,

W. SHENSTONE:

LXXXIII. To the same, on the same Subject.

Dear Mr. Jago,

The Leasowes,
Feb. 22, 1755.

I RECEIVED a letter from Doddsley, dated the fifteenth of February; informing me that you were then in town, had been with him, and left your directions

directions whither he might send you a set of Miscellanies.

FEBRUARY the twentieth, and not *before*, arrived young H— with your letter; very obligingly intended to give me previous notice of your journey; but which, by the iniquity of chance, tended only to acquaint me with an opportunity which I had *lost*.

THERE is nothing could have been so fortunate as your journey to London, had Mr. H— thought proper to bring your letter in due time.—What excuse he made for his neglect, or whether he made any, I have really forgot. This I know, that the whole affair has been unlucky. There has been abundant time for consultation, and a perfect series of opportunities of which we have not been suffered to avail ourselves.—It is now three weeks or a month since I corrected the proof-sheets; was so hurried in the doing of it that I scarce knew what I wrote; and yet, in spite of all this hurry, the book is hitherto unpublished. *Now*, indeed, it must be much too late for alterations, as D— has given me some room to expect a book this very day.—I know but little what he has done in consequence of that discretionary power with which I, through haste, was obliged to intrust him; but in what I have done *myself*, you may expect to find all the effects of *dulness precipitated*.

It

It is now the twenty-third of February, and I have received no fresh account of our friend Doddsley's proceedings; nor am I able to trace them, as I expected, in the news-papers.

As to your share of this Miscellany, you can have no cause to be dissatisfied.—After what manner he has thought proper to print Lady L—'s verses, I am a good deal uncertain; but I apprehend he has not followed her own readings very precisely, and that the blame thereof is to be thrown upon me.—I am concerned for the memory of my poor friend Whittler, and regret that his *better* pieces did not fall into my hands. I think that Doddsley, however, would have done him greater justice, had he inserted his translation of "Horace and Lydia." It is true, the translations of that Ode are out of number; but *his*, if I mistake not, had many beauties of its own.—I do not know whether I ever hinted to you, that *his* genius and that of Ovid were apparently congenial.—Had he cultivated his with equal care, perhaps the similitude had been as obvious as that of your twin-daughters.—Mr. Graves has one small well-polished gem in this collection; his verses upon Medals.—His little conjugal Love-song is also natural and easy.—I told you what I least disliked of my *own* puerilities.—If the printing of my Rural Inscriptions be *invidious*, it was altogether owing to the instigation

tion of Sir G—L—. There are four or five little matters, which, if he have pointed with my name, incorrect as they are, I shall be utterly disconsolate; at least, till I get sight of a succeeding impression. For though I am not much solicitous about a poetical reputation (and indeed it is of little importance to so *domestic* an animal as myself), yet I could ill endure to pass for an affected, powerless *pretender*.

AND now no more upon the subject.—I have nothing to add that can the least amuse you.—You, who have been conversant with all the busy and the splendid scenes of life, can want no materials to make a letter entertaining.—Indeed you never *did*.—I shall be glad, however, to receive a *long* one, upon what subjects you please.

I HAVE passed a very dull and unamusive winter; my health indeed rather better than I experienced it last year; but my head *as* confused, and my spirits *as* low. I live in hopes of an opportunity of seeing you at Harbury; but I begin now to receive visits as an honest beggar does an alms, with my humblest thanks for the favour, and with a despair of making a return.

PERHAPS my next letter may discover somewhat more *resolution*: inclination I never want; being at all times with singular affection yours,

W. SHENSTONE.

LXXXIV. To

LXXXIV. To the same.

The Leasowes,
Dear Mr. Jago, April 3, 1755.

I HAVE so long expected the favour of a few lines from you, that I begin at last to question whether you received the letter I sent you. It was inclosed in one to Mr. M——, whom I requested to further it with all convenient expedition. I am neither able to recollect the whole contents of it; nor indeed, if I *were*, could I endure the thoughts of transcribing them. The chief intention of it, however, was to acquaint you of Mr. H——'s unhappy delay in the delivery of that letter with which you favoured me from Radway.

WHAT confirms me in a suspicion that my last letter miscarried is, that Mr. Wren lately acquainted me of your being at Wroxall upon business, and of your making some slight mention of Mr. Doddsley's publication, without intimating that you discovered any design you had of writing to me. This is mere preamble and stuff: implying nothing more than the desire I have to *hear* from you, when it ought also to express how impatiently I long to *see* you. Worldly concerns and my winterly state of health have detained me at home for these many months past: worldly concerns may have confined you likewise; but as your health and spirits are universally better

better than mine, and as you have much less dislike to travelling than myself, I would hope that my absence from Harbury will never cause you to neglect any opportunity of coming hither. For my own part, I have been meditating upon a visit to you all this winter; and do, at this time, resolve most strenuously to perform it before June. But the many such schemes of pleasure in which I have been disappointed are a sort of check upon my expressions, and make me promise with fear. As to Doddsley's performance, which you must have received before this time, I will make no observations till I have the pleasure of seeing you: and yet there are many points I would discuss, and many accounts I want to give you. So many indeed, that they would furnish out perhaps a superficial drawling letter; but would serve infinitely better for conversation, with the book before us. The volume, I am told, is well received in town; though political intelligence must engross much of its present attention.

Mr. HYLTON is in my neighbourhood, and upon the point of settling at his farm. Could you possibly spend a week with us, we would try to make it agreeable. At all events, I beg to hear from you; and that, not merely as it will afford me great pleasure, but as, at the same time, it will ease me of some solicitude. I will not make this a long letter, though I wish to receive a long one in return; having

having a head very little qualified to add any thing
that may amuse you, though a heart very sincerely
and affectionately at your service.

W. SHENSTONE.

LXXXV. To the same.

Dear Mr. Jago,

The Leaves,

Decr 14, 1756.

THOUGH the silence that has prevailed for so
long a time betwixt us be, I fear, to be placed
to my account, yet do I by no means imagine that
you will desire me to fill half this letter with apo-
logies. Suffice it, that I owe all the world, at this
time, either letters, visits, or money: yet that my
heart is as well disposed in each of these respects, as
that of any one person who is insolvent. The regard
indeed that I owe to you has been a troublesome in-
mate within my bosom for some time past, making
daily remonstrances against the injustice which I have
done it; and urging me strenuously to take horse,
and make my *personal* apologies at Harbury. —
I return you many thanks for Mr. S——'s company,
and for the sight of the manuscript which he shewed
me. Alas! that I cannot spare money to drain and
to improve my lands, or to put almost any part of
his excellent rules in execution! and yet that Mr.

Childe of Kinlett (bearing my place always termed *a farm*) should come expecting to find all things managed here according to the perfection of *husbandry*! As little *can* I pretend to improve Mr. S——'s treatise, as his treatise *will* my farm: no farther at *most*, than in what regards the *style*, or *plan* of his performance. Yet could I wish to see both *it* and *him* again before he prints it; wishing him all the success which his very *endeavour* deserves. Assuredly the present is not the *time* for his publication: more *immediate* remedies than can be derived from agriculture are become absolutely requisite to relieve the sufferings of this nation.—I should be extremely well-pleased to visit you at Harbury, but cannot even propose to myself that happiness at *present*; and were I even to *promise*, have but too much reason to know the *uncertainty* of my *performance*. Yet am I sensible enough we *ought to meet*, if we purpose that what we print should have the advantage of our mutual criticisms. Let me then *conjure* you to come over, at your convenience, for a few days, that we may agree at least upon some *general* points, and make no worse a figure in the future Miscellany than we have done in the foregoing*.—But I have really more things to *say* than I will pretend to *scrawl* upon paper; nor can I endure to retail a few particulars, while I am impatient to communicate the whole.

* See the Edinburgh Review, N^o I.

LET me acquaint you while I remember, that there is at this time a Mr. Duncombe and his son, clergymen, that are publishing a new translation of Horace. Whatever you may think of their *success*, after *Francis*, I believe I may pronounce them men of real merit, and in no wise destitute of learning or genius. They have requested me to communicate any *version* or *imitation* that I can furnish, either of my own or of any friends; wherefore, if you *have* any thing of this sort, I should be glad if you would put it in my power to oblige them. The son has an "Ode to Health" in the fourth volume of Doddsley's Miscellany.

UNDER the head of intelligence, I have mighty little to convey.—The house at Hagley is in a manner finished, so far as concerns the shell; and wants nothing besides a portico to be as compleat as most in England.—Pray remember me to Mr. Talbot, Mr. Miller, and Mr. Holbeach; should they call upon me next year, they will find my place better worth their notice.

I AM, and *have* been ever, cordially and most affectionately,

Your most obedient servant,

W. SHENSTONE.

LXXXVI. To Mr. GRAVES, with some Account of
Politics and Poetry.

Dear Mr. Graves,

The Leasowes,

April 4. 1735.

YOU will be harrassed with my letters till you condemn my excessive leisure as loudly as I have lamented that you should ever feel the want of it. Nor is it a point so easily decided which of us may be the greater sufferer; you through my officiousness, or I by your long silence. Yet the partiality which you have ever shewn me will, I think, dispose you to receive my letters more patiently than it is in my power to sustain the loss of yours. After all, I should not write at present, but that the Miscellanies with which Doddsley compliments us arrived last week at The Leasowes. I desire therefore you would acquaint me, whether the sett that he means for you should remain here till your arrival; or if you chuse that I should send it by the Birmingham-stage to Bath. Having made this enquiry, I was thinking to conclude; but cannot reconcile myself to the novelty of sending you three empty pages. The Parliament will rise too soon for the publication of my "*Rural Elegance*;" and having performed my promise to Doddsley, I think no more about such laurels as the public can bestow upon me, but am giving all my attention to such as I can purchase of my nursery-man. I wish, however, that the vo-

lume

I may recompence Dodsley for his trouble: I may also add, for his ingenuity, and for his politeness in giving each of us a compleat sett. They are elegantly bound, and all as much alike as possible.

THE present crisis of state-affairs does not seem to favour his publication, as the attention of the public must lean greatly to that quarter. I saw a letter from Sir William M—— (who corresponds with Lady Luxborough), which placed the struggles of the ministry in a clearer light than they had yet appeared to me. It seems that persons of all denominations are for carrying on the war with vigour; and the King's application for a Vote of Credit was received with general approbation. The zeal of the Parliament was indeed so remarkable on this occasion, that, instead of the 600,000 *l.* at first intended, it was thought proper to propose a million. But the services were ascertained, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer made accountable for the application of it. The augmentation of the fleet with 20,000 seamen; the raising 5000 marines on a plan of dividing them into small companies, which will render them more useful both by sea and land; the completion and reinforcement of the Irish regiments; are the uses to which this million is to be appropriated. Mr. Fox and his land-war-party sat mute, whilst Mr. Legge with great openness and perspicuity explained the present schemes; as they were calcul-

lated, to exert our whole strength at sea, and, if possible, no where else. Mr. Dodington, who, it seems, has not spoke of many years, charmed every body. His wit did not only entertain, but animate and affect his hearers. “ *It were better, he said, than lose the dominion of the Ocean, that the Ocean should overwhelm us: for what Briton could wish to leave a posterity crawling upon this island, only to feel the tyranny, and swell the victories, of France?* ” It seems, F—, in his opposition to the Duke of Newcastle, is supported by the Duke of Cumberland, his army, and the Scotch: that the ministry (or the D. of N—’s party) seem not displeased with a prospect of uniting with the Tories, who now hold the balance; and it seems the Tories, by Sir William’s letter, are as little displeased to unite with the Ministry.

You will guess that good part of this political account is *transcribed*; and you will guess aright. I had some thoughts that it might amuse you, and had no occasion to use other expressions.—Let me now, once more, return to the futile objects of my *own* amusement. The impression upon this letter will be taken from my new seal. The motto that I have pitched upon is, *SVPEREST MEMORIA*: though I yet retain some hankeing after the single word *PRAETERITIS*. Probably this, however, is not the last seal that I shall cause this man to cut in steel. The altar is not yet finished: *ANTE OMNIA MVSAE*; but
it

it does not quite satisfy me.—I will inclose the two last letters I received from Mr. Doddsley; but you must not think I build too much upon any compliment which he there makes me.—It is true, I think him a very sincere man; but he cannot have been conversant so long with modern-writers, but he must conjecture, when their piece is published, that they a little hunger for applause. I am now uncertain whether you will receive a letter from him; as he has, unaccountably I think, sent your books *hither*, and not to Bath. I am, however, fully satisfied, that your first and last pieces, more *especially*, do credit to his collection, and must please all persons of taste.

I DESIRE my best respects to Mrs. Graves, who will be pleased to see the affection that subsists betwixt you perpetuated. She will also feel some satisfaction in the professions of friendship that are made you by your most affectionate and faithful humble servant,

W. SHENSTONE.

LXXXVII. To the same, with a Recommendation of
Mr. Dodsley to his Acquaintance.

From Mrs. Balkerville's,
Birmingham, July 27.

Dear Mr. Graves,

1756.

I were needless for me to recommend to you a person whom you so truly esteem as Mr. Dodsley; and from whom you will gladly receive a gift, not more upon my account, than upon his and your own. — All I beg is, that, considering the shortness of his time at Bath, you will be acquainted with him at first sight; which, I think, should ever be a maxim with persons of genius and humanity. — He has made a few days extremely agreeable to me at The Leasowes; has been shewing me his new Tragedy, which I wished you also might peruse. If I be not unaccountably imposed upon by my friendship for the writer, the extraordinary merit of this performance is altogether unquestionable. — I will not inform you through what hands it has passed in town; because I would have you communicate your sentiments to him with entire freedom, being assured the delicacy of them may yet be of service, and that the openness with which you communicate them will be infinitely pleasing to Mr. Dodsley. He has done me the honour to ask me for an epilogue: — I wish, but fear to undertake it. — Should any lucky hint occur to you, I well know how much you are able to ma-

page

nage it to advantage. In that case, I would beg a line from you the first opportunity.—What talk I of a line from you, who am at this very time many letters and apologies in your debt! but I cannot add many syllables to the letter I am writing.—I will write again in a few days. Mean time, my compliments to Mrs. Graves; and remember, that Mr. Doddsley and you become well acquainted at first sight.

I am ever, dear Mr. Graves,

Your most affectionate humble servant,

W. SHENSTONE,

LXXXVIII. To the same, on Mr. DODDSLEY and his Works.

The Leasowes,
Dear Mr. Graves, Mar. 7, 1757.

I HAVE passed a very dull and unamusive winter here—the worse, for being neither *disposed* nor *qualified* to keep up a correspondence with my friends: with you, among the *chief*; and yet it is upon you that I must depend to make up my deficiencies with Mr. Doddsley.—The poor man has been afflicted with the most *lasting* fit of the gout he ever underwent before.—His patience, on these occasions, is inimitable.—His excursion to the *Regions of Terror and Pity* is not the only instance of his ability to compose verses in the midst of pain. When he sent me a copy of it,

he

he let me know, that he had transmitted another to you by the same post: I should be glad to receive your remarks upon it, ere I communicate my own. I have, for some weeks past, found my head so terribly confused, that it has been with difficulty I could *think* or *express* myself on the most superficial topic. I hope, in a little time, to be able to examine it more attentively than I can at present: yet, in the mean while, must acknowledge, that I think his subject capable of furnishing extraordinary beauties for an Ode: and *such*, I think, he should *call* it; dropping the narrative parts and the connexions as much as possible. I cannot wish him to print it without very *material* alterations, and what would occasion almost the same trouble as it would require to *re-write* it. I do not mean this as a condemnation of what he has already done, so much as a proof of my opinion how much he will be able to improve it. *After all*, it will scarce affect me half so much as his Tragedy. He is so *honest* a man, that the work he has to give the world is much better than the specimen: or, to borrow an idea from *my situation*, the grain that he has to deliver will prove much better than the sample. It is with shame I acknowledge I have not yet sent him his epilogue; and I feel the greater compunction of mind upon this score, as it is possible he may impute my neglect to Garrick's refusal of his play. This weighs nothing with you or me; a thousand motives may affect a Manager, that

that have little or nothing to do with the merit of the performance; yet he may so far thank Mr. Garrick, that whatever his refusal takes from the *reputation* of his Tragedy, it will, through Doddsley's industry, add apparently to its value. I have not yet been able to satisfy myself with every part of your epilogue, and must either omit sending it at present, or must send him an imperfect copy. If you write to him, let me beg you to give the most favourable account you *can* of me.

SOMEBODY acquainted me (I think it was Mr. Talbot) that your old friend Ballard had bequeathed you his coins for a legacy. I was truly glad to hear it; but have wondered since, that you never once informed me of so considerable an acquisition.

I REMEMBER a poem of yours, called —, upon the present taste in gardening; which you will not wonder if my late employments make me wish once more to see. Be so kind as to send me a copy of this, as well as of any other little pieces that you have in your bureau. Some of yours deserve a better place than what is assigned them in the Magazine. In particular, I remember that upon Enigmas, and Mopsy. Be assured, I will make no *use* of any without your previous consent. You know, I suppose, that Doddsley's other Miscellanies do not appear before next winter.—I received from him, together

gether with his Ode, a few Elegies published by Mr. Whitehead. They are, I think, worth your perusal; and designed by my worthy friend to excite my emulation.—Alas! that I am so ill able to deserve the encouragements which I receive from him!

My neighbour Baskerville, at the close of this month, publishes his fine edition of Virgil. It will, for *type* and *paper*, be a perfect curiosity. He follows the Cambridge edition.

WHAT think you of their management in regard to Mr. Byng? I cannot help thinking the King should *pardon* him. The Court-martial, by acquitting him of cowardice or disaffection, have left no *motive* for his *negligence*, beside an *error of his judgement*: for we cannot impute it to *supineness*, *indifference*, or *inattention*. And then to sentence a man for error, is to expect infallibility. That twelfth article of war is most undoubtedly ill-expressed.—Pray do not forget my best respects to Mrs. Graves.—Let me hear from you soon, and believe me ever yours,

W. SHENSTONE.

LXXIX. On the same

The Leasowes,

Dear Mr. Graves,

April 8, 1757.

WHAT remarks I had to make upon our friend
Dodley's Ode, I sent him the last post.
I would gladly have occasioned them to pass by
Claverton; but, having delayed them so long, I was
impatient to convince him that I had not *wholly* dis-
regarded his request. They are indeed pretty co-
pious: and yet I have reserved to myself the pri-
vilege of re-criticising when I see his altered copy.
I recommended to him the addition which you pro-
posed, and some others; and if he will but take the
pains that I have chalked out for him, I doubt not
that he will render it an excellent Ode, though he
may not find it a very *popular* one. I have also sent
him a copy of our epilogue, not much different from
what you saw; to these I added my little Ode on
Lady Luxborough's furnishing her library, and Perry's
Verses upon the Malvern-waters. At the close of
these last, there appears (with Perry's approbation), a
short address to Dr. Wall of Worcester; a very eminent
physician, and the great patron of this mineral, who
has promoted a subscription in the county towards
building, near this well, for the accommodation of
strangers.

I PURPOSE

I PURPOSE also to give Dodſley the little Ode I incloſe; and would beg the favour of you to adviſe me concerning the additional ſanzas, to fix the readings in the reſt, and to return me the copy.

I COME now to analyze your remark on Ballard's legacy; which is indeed very ingenious, but will ſcarce bear examination: nor do I think that you rather wiſh to have *found* that ſet of medals, than to have them *given* you by a deceaſed friend. Affuredly, if we do not allow pleaſure to be *predominant* in this kind of melancholy, we deſtroy the foundation of all tragic or elegiac writings; Melpomene has no place amongſt the Muſes; and the pains that we have taken with our friend Dodſley's penſive Ode have been employed to no purpoſe. But you want not theſe pedantic flouriſhes, and are wholly of my mind.

MARTIN'S Magazine is, I believe, pretty obſcure, and I wonder where you got a ſight of it. It was, however, fortunate enough for *me* that you gave me a copy of "James Dawson." I never yet ſaw your verſes on *that Grotto*, or from *Phædrus*, and I want to ſee your W— once more, concerning which you are ſilent. Your "Pepper-box" and "Mopſy" might, I think, appear in Dodſley's Miſcellany, either *with* or *without* your name. I alſo want a copy of your verſes

verses upon Riddles; and whenever you have a leisure hour, should be glad if you would look them out and send them.

Go, and think yourself an happy man; at least, if your children be recovered, as I am inclined to think they are; and give my service to Mrs. Graves, for the happiness that she occasions you; of which I cannot but partake, being, with constant and sincere affection, your most obliged humble servant,

W. SHENSTONE.

XC. On the same.

Dear Mr. Graves,

About 1757.

DO you know my hand-writing?—It is really such a length of time since you had demands upon me for letters, that I am hardly able to enumerate the several causes of my neglect. *This* I know, that scarce a day has passed, during this interval of silence, in which I have not *remembered* you with the most affectionate esteem.—I *hope* you correspond with our friend Doddsley; and that it is not altogether disagreeable to you, to find he is printing some of your verses. He has many, alas! too many, of mine; which I suffered him to take away in summer, and which the state of my winter health and spirits renders me but ill able to revise. I believe,

I am,

I am, even now, the principal cause that his two volumes remain yet unpublished; nor can I express the pain it gives me, to be thus detrimental to his interests, and to delay the publication of so much better pieces than my own. I am also dissatisfied upon another score: I mean, that I have been wanting to myself, in not asking the benefit of your advice; which I have heretofore experienced to be at once so comfortable and so advantageous; but although the scheme was projected in summer, the business of correction was (by me at least) deferred till winter, and then I had neither spirits to correct or to correspond.

I AM really as much obliged to you for the pains which you took on my behalf in London, as though the subject of your enquiry were a thing of more importance to me; but, indeed, you can hardly conceive how indifferent I am now grown, not only as to articles of that sort, but to aught that regards external splendour.

I REALLY have not time to enter upon the merits of inoculation; but am very sure that Mrs. G.'s danger was enough to influence your determination. I am heartily glad to hear of her recovery; and can but look upon the weeks which I purpose to pass some time hereafter with you at Claverton, as the most agreeable of any that belong to the remainder of my life. I am sensible, that if I *could* to spend

in

in poetry, I should lose no time in visiting public places: but my wishes of that sort are most extremely limited, and I shall visit *you* on the account of *friendship*; that is (past all doubt) on a much *better principle*.

I HAVE long meant to write to you, and have accordingly given *some* answer to most parts of your last letter. Nevertheless, the occasion of this present letter is quite of another kind.—A young painter of my acquaintance is advised to go to Bath, has a recommendation to the Bishop of B—, who will introduce him to the Duke of N—. And though I cannot so easily bring him acquainted with nobles or prime-ministers, I can give him directions to my friend, who, in point of taste, is their superior. The person then, who, I suppose, will be the bearer of this letter, has, by dint of mere ingenuity, risen to a considerable eminence in fruit-pieces, &c. He has been employed by Lord Lyttelton, and is much admired at Oxford: for my own part, I believe you will think he is in few respects inferior to, and has (if I am not mistaken) some advantages of, Stranover; but you will see his pieces. All I have to say further on the occasion is, that he is a native of our parish, and a particular friend of *mine*; and if it were in your power to promote his interest at Bath, you would not only highly gratify *me*, but at the same time do a service to one of the least assuming,

most ingenious, and most amiable men I know.—I beg my best respects to your family, and am, dear Mr. Graves, most affectionately yours,

W. SHENSTONE.

XCI. On the same.

The Leafower,
Dear Mr. Graves, May 30, 1738.

I THANK God, I have recovered a tolerable degree of health this spring; though by no means free from so much heaviness and lassitude, as renders me averse to all activity both of body and mind. In the course of my disorder, so long as I could bear to think of any sublunary enjoyment, I remembered my friends, and of course thought much of you; but its advances were so precipitate, when I sent for the physicians, that I soon received a wrench from every object of this world: and it was by slow degrees, even after my recovery, that my mind took so much root again as appears necessary for its immediate support. I suppose you have been informed that my fever was in great measure hypochondriacal; and left my nerves so extremely sensible, that, even on no very interesting subject, I could readily think myself into a vertigo: I had almost said an epilepsy; for surely I was oftentimes near it. It became, therefore, expedient for my recovery, to amuse myself with a succession of the most trivial objects I could find;

find; and this kind of carelessness I have indulged till it is grown into an habit. Even letters to my friends are hardly consistent with my rule of health; yet I could be no longer silent with regard to you, without feeling a sensation that would hurt me more. This may fairly enough be termed the first letter I have wrote since my recovery; wherein if I should tell you one half that I am inclined to do, relating to this dreadful illness, what room should I then leave to speak on any other subject? I must, therefore, tell these things by word of mouth, or write them some other time. The journies which my friends, and indeed physicians, propose for me, are what certainly bid fairest for the completion of my cure: yet there are many, many things, which, however unfit for the task, I must endeavour to adjust before I can leave home with any possibility of enjoyment. Need I mention any other than my cursed embarrassment with D—; who, during my *danger*, was induced to stop proceedings; but is now beginning law afresh, and, by the removal of tenants from *his* share of the Harborough estate, has now wriggled himself into possession of almost one half of *mine*? However, I am not without hopes of seeing all terminated in a little time; nor entirely without a prospect of seeing you at Claverton this summer. That you may think this the more probable, I am pressed by two young gentlemen, whom I very much esteem, to accompany them on a visit to Mr. Bamfylde in Somersetshire.

These two gentlemen are, Mr. Dean and Mr. Knight. Perhaps you may have heard of Mr. Bamfylde, who is very much at Bath; is there now with his lady; or has left the place but lately; and whose fortune, person, figure, and accomplishments, can hardly leave him long unnoticed in any place where he resides. Yet my visit to Eshercomb must be of secondary consequence to me, whilst you live by the road-side. I am much obliged to you for your compliment on my Poemata in Doddsley's Miscellanies; which came very seasonably, considering how I had been mortified by the first sight of what was done. To speak the truth, there are many things appear there very contrary to my intentions; but which I am more desirous may be attributed to the unseasonableness of my fever, than to my friend D—'s precipitation. My purpose was to acknowledge as *mine*, none of the pieces which now follow the longer Ode to Lady Laxborough. Her name was actually erased; as also my own at the close of your Fable. The verses by Mrs. Bennet to Mr. Richardson were absolutely new to me; where my name occurs again. All this is against me; as a thing in itself invidious to have one's name recur so often, and as my *own lines contradict* the merit which my friends so liberally allow me.—The verses of mine in the sixth volume (which was printed before the fifth) were printed without my knowledge; and when I sent up an improved copy, it arrived a good deal too late. As things happen,

I am made to own several things of inferior merit to those which I do *honour*.—All this is against me; but my thoughts are avocated from this edition, and wholly fixed upon a future, wherein I hope, Doddsley will be prevailed upon to omit some things also from *other* hands which discredit his collection: and, to balance *all my discomforts* on this head, the world will know that I am esteemed by a person whom I esteem so much as myself. I know not how it happens, but the taste for humorous poetry does not prevail at this time: yet I cannot agree with Mr. J. Warton, that it is no poetry *at all*, any more than that a good representation of Dutch boors is not a picture.—His brother, the Professor, is to be here with his pupil Lord Donnegal, &c. this summer.—Mr. Spence and Mr. Doddsley will stay a day or two here this month in their way to Scotland; and Mr. Home, the author of Douglas, &c. called on me, and we spent an evening together at Admiral Smith's. Thus my *ferme ornée* procures me interviews with persons whom it might otherwise be my *wish* rather than my good fortune to see. Would to God, it could attract *you*, whom I more long to see than any one! and let me tell you, there were considerable additions made to it last year: Doddsley's present of Faunus; a new Gothic-building, or rather a skreen, which cost ten pounds; and the ruins of a Priory, which, however, make a tenant's house, that pays me tolerable poundage.—I am growing a little into *your*

taste: why should not you advance farther into mine? I mean, I have a love for medals, by means of some that have been given me: yet do not think that I shall ever rival you—my object is only beauty, and I love only those of exquisite workmanship; so that this is no more a rivalry than that of two persons who admire the sex, but love different individuals; a rivalry, which, I trust, is more likely to cement our friendship than disunite us; which it is my conviction and my comfort no sort of rivalry will ever do. I have hardly room to express my good wishes for long health and happiness to Mrs. Graves and your little family, and to subscribe myself, my dear friend,

Your ever affectionate humble servant,

W. SHENSTONE.

XCII. On the same.

Dear Mr. Graves,

July 22, 1758.

IT gives me great anxiety when I reflect how long I have waited for the satisfaction of a line from you. I beg, if you are alive and well, you will let me know so by the next post.

Mr. Doddsley and Mr. Spence have been here and stayed a week with me. The former was in certain hopes of seeing you in town; but I do not find that

he

he either saw or heard from you, which *adds* to my anxiety.

I HAVE seen few whom I liked so much, upon so little acquaintance, as Mr. Spence; extremely polite, friendly, chearful, and master of an infinite fund of subjects for agreeable conversation. Had my affairs permitted me, they had certainly drawn me with them into Scotland; whither they are gone, for about a month, upon a journey of curiosity.

I BELIEVE it will give you pleasure to hear that my law-suit with D— is accommodated, by the generous interposition of my Lord Stamford; concerning whose benevolence and magnanimity it is impossible for me to speak in the terms which they deserve. It is ended, I hope, not very *disadvantageously* for me; apparently with *one* advantage, of being intirely exculpated in the opinion of all mankind. The common method (as M. Bruyere observes) is to condemn *both* on these occasions. This suits people's indolence, and favours their impartiality. And though the equitableness of my whole conduct in this affair was self-evident to all that were near me, yet I found many that were inclined to blame us *both*, and *some* that I could never convince till *now* that the fault was not *wholly* mine.

Your "Pepper-box and Salt-feller" are in one of the Chronicles.—They pillage Doddsley's two last volumes of all that is worth perusal—I surely have some friend amongst the writers of the Monthly Review; for I have not only escaped a flogging, but am treated with great civility.

I NEVER know how to leave off when I begin writing to you, having always a great deal to say. I only purposed you a few lines, to desire you would write directly. Pray make my best compliments to Mrs. Graves, and believe me ever yours most invariably.

W. SHENSTONE.

XCVI. To the same, containing an Account of his
Excursions and Amusements.

The Leafowes,
Dear Mr. Graves, Nov. 25, 1738.

I HAVE had daily expectations of a line from you these two months: conscious, however, that I did not deserve any; and affording a manifest instance of the infatuations of self-love. The last letter that I received of yours is dated the close of July, since which time I have been chiefly engaged in my customary amusements; embellishing my farm, and receiving the company that came to see it. My
principal

principal *excursions* have been to Enville, on Lord Grey's birth-day; to Lord Ward's, upon another invitation; and to the Worcester Music-meeting. I need not mention what an appearance there was of company at Worcester; dazzling enough, you may suppose, to a person who, like me, has not seen a public place these ten years. Yet I made a shift to enjoy the splendour, as well as the music that was prepared for us. I presume, nothing in the way of harmony can possibly go further than the Oratorio of "The Messiah." It seems the best composer's best composition. Yet I fancied I could observe *some parts* in it, wherein Handel's judgement failed him; where the music was not equal, or was even *opposite*, to what the words required. Very many of the noblesse, whom I had seen at The Deafowes, were as complaisant to me as possible; whereas it was my *former* fate, in public places, to be as little regarded as a journeyman shoe-maker.—There I first saw our present Bishop; also our late Bishop's monument, which is fine.—Lastly, there I first saw my Lady Coventry; to whom, I believe, one must allow all that the world allows in point of beauty. She is certainly the most *unexceptionable* figure of a woman I ever saw; and made most of the ladies there seem of almost another *species*. On the whole, I was not a little pleased that I had made this excursion; and returned with double relish to the *enjoyment* of my *farm*. It is now high time to take some notice of
your

your obliging letter. I think I was not told the purport of the journey you made to London; so can only say, I am very sorry for the aggravating circumstances of your disappointment; and hope, long before this time, that Mrs. Graves is quite recovered. — Did I forget to make your excuses to Doddsley or no? — he was here (as I remember) soon after, with Mr. Spence, in their way to Scotland — Mr. Spence, the very man you would like, and who would like you, of all mankind. He took my Elegies into Scotland, and sent them back on his return, with a sheet or two of criticisms, and an handsome letter. — How much am I interested in the preservation of his friendship! — and yet, such is my *destiny* (for I can give it no other name), I have never wrote to him *since*. This *impartiality* of my neglect, you must accept *yourself* as *some* apology: but to proceed; Mr. Spence chose himself an oak here for a seat, which I have inscribed to him.

“SPENCE'S OAK.”

“EXIMIO. NOSTRO. CRITONI.”

“CVI. DICARI. *VELLET.”

“MVSA RV. OMNIV. ET. GRATIA RV. CHORVS.”

“DICAT. AMICITIA.”

I ABSOLUTELY forgot to talk to Doddsley about your —, and I am vexed; because I could, with a safe conscience, have raised his idea of your

* Subintellige SEDEM ISTAM (hanc).

abilities.

abilities. However, it is not too late, even if you care to publish it this winter.—His play comes on (I fancy *this very night*) at Covent-garden. What he says in behalf of this step is, that there was no glimpse of probability, that Garrick would ever admit it at the other house*.—Mrs. Bellamy is his Cleone, and speaks the epilogue, of which more anon. I suppose he acts by Lord Chesterfield's opinion: for I know, when he was going to print it (since he came home) with a *proper* dedication to Mr. Garrick, my Lord then prevented him, telling him, it *would* be acted one day or other.—Did I ever send you a copy of the epilogue, with all the additions and alterations? Dodsley first liked, then disliked it, and lastly liked it again; only desiring me to soften the satire, shorten the whole (for it was upwards of sixty lines), and add a complimentary close to the *boxes*.—All this I have endeavoured, and sent it him last Monday. *You* would not care to own it: and he would fain have *me*; but I think neither of us should run the risque, where so little honour is to be acquired; yet Mr. Melmoth's name to the prologue is an inducement.—I was very near surprizing you at Claverton this autumn, with my friend young Knight, in his way to Mr. Bamfylde's; but he goes *again* in spring, and I shall certainly accompany him; I have *bespoke*, but not yet *procured* any, horses for my chaise.

* He says, the players liked it, and seemed inclined to take pains with it.

It

It is a neat one; you will find I have made two or three excursions in it.—I saw Mr. Patten's "Topographical Letters" soon after they were published.—If you continue to me the honour of a shield in your Gothic alcove, the field should be either "Og, three king-fishes proper," or, with the addition of a chief gules, three trefoils argent—no bars, the veron bend &c.—More of this when I write again. Motto, FLUMINATA SEM, SYLVASQUE INGLORIVS—
 EVERA MINT, or nebulosus vixit a silva fons tunc
 Wagon II, and gallei, quidam tunc vixit a silva fons tunc

I cannot recollect my company of the season, to tell it you.—Sir Francis Dashwood, Lord Litchfield, and Mr. Sheldon, were here together in the beginning of the autumn; and I have strong invitations to visit them.—I have a very genteel letter from Sir Francis, offering me gold-fishes; and I have a double inducement to visit Mr. Sheldon, as he lives near Mickleton, and is the most agreeable man alive.—Your acquaintance Lord W—dined and spent good part of a day with me. Under a sort of gloomy appearance, a man of admirable sense and some humour. I put him in mind of you, and the remarkable monument at Cambden.—Mr. Thomas Warton was also here with Lord Donnegal, and has since sent me his "Inscriptions," which are rather too simple, even for my taste.—Bishop of Worcester with his family and company—Lord Willoughby—Lord Foley—I mention Lord Foley the rather, because I shall

shall call on your friend Dr. Charleton (who was also here) to pass a day or two with me at Whitley.

—I shall pass, also a day or two at our Bishop's, whom I met since at Enville. These two (*perhaps* what I *will* besides) will probably be the principal, or only excursions that I shall make this winter.—God send it may no more affect my health than it has hitherto done.—I am at present tolerably well, and live more temperately than before.—Would to God you could come over; go with me to Dr. Charleton's, and Lord Foley's, and Lord Stamford's, and pass a week here! I would meet you with my chaise at Worcester, or even farther. I have finished a building opposite to the new stable, which I think you saw.—They together give my house a degree of splendour. Did you see my Priory?—a tenant's house, one room whereof is to have Gothic shields round the cornice.—I am in some doubt whether to make it an House of Lords or House of Commons; if the former, my private friends will have shields round my Gothic bed-chamber.—The wretch is cursed that *begins* a letter with no better a pen than I *finish* one with. My dear friend, write directly a long letter.—Keep me alive in the memory of Mrs. Graves, and believe me ever yours most affectionately,

W. SHENSTONE.

I HAVE received a present of the Edinburgh Homer (2 vols. folio) from the Solicitor General, Mr. Pringle; and many other books from other gentlemen of Scotland.

XCIV. To

XCIV. To the same, in Expectation of a Visit.

Dear Mr. Graves, Christmas, 1758.

THERE can be nothing more welcome to me than the intelligence which you give of your intended visit at The Leasowes.—God knows how few of these interviews may for the future be allotted to us; and I should be glad at least to testify the joy which they afford me, by meeting you at Birmingham, or elsewhere within one day's journey for my chaise.—Pray be so good as to give me one more letter before you set out.—Very glad should I be to pay my respects to your brother at Mickleton, for whom I have the truest respect; but dare not give encouragement, for fear that aught should interfere.—I have ten thousand things to say to you; but will defer them, I think, *all*. I am positive your — may be made *advantageous* to you by means of Doddsley; and even *reputable*, if you so please.—Will not Mrs. G— accompany you? pray convince her of my sincere regard.

I WANT to congratulate you on your escape from the small-pox, in a manner *different* from your ordinary acquaintance; yet am not able to express my sentiments—guess the rest; knowing, and sufficiently knowing, that I am, with constancy and ardour, your most affectionate friend,

W. SHENSTONE.

XCV. To

XCV. To Mr. Jago.

The Leasowes,
Dear Mr. Jago, Jan. 6, 1759.

IF you knew the maxims on which I conduct myself, you might call me perhaps *unpolite*; but, I think, by no means *unfriendly*; I mean with respect to the ordinary congratulations on your marriage. Were you and I less intimate, less experienced, and less assured friends, it had been no venial omission to have neglected such a ceremony. Perhaps I should not have neglected it; but as I have the satisfaction of believing that you would rejoice in any success of mine, so I hope you would not distrust my sentiments upon any change of your condition which you yourself esteemed for the *better*. I do indeed, my worthy friend, wish you much joy, both *now* and at *all* times; and you will ever discern it in my face, as often as fortune grants us an interview. Mr. S— is a benevolent man, and I am sure would withhold no information that tended to *illustrate* our friendship on either side.

I HAVE thoughts of proceeding on to Harbury, whenever I come to Mr. Wren's; as I have long enough made my friend a promise, and intend ere long to do. Many reasons occur why I cannot set forward to-morrow morning: are these reasons substantial,

stantial, or no other than the sly and sophistical insinuations of indolence?—surely the former.

DODSLEY, and indeed Mr. Spence, both expect me in town this February.—I fear it will not be; but if it *should*, how readily would I give notice, and become obliged to you for your company.

THOUGH I should have *expected* you would select a partner whose society you could enjoy, yet I was not a little satisfied with the hint given me in your letter, as well as in one I had before received from Mr. S—. It is not for such ladies as you and I esteem, that Mrs. * Bellamy's extraordinary lecture was intended; and a *lecture* it would have been with a vengeance, had not D— omitted some thirty lines, and substituted about twelve or fourteen of his own. However, he is now going to print his fourth edition of it; in which the original epilogue will be restored, as well as considerable improvements introduced into his play. He sold two thousand of his first edition the very first day he published it.

I HAVE so much to tell you, and of so *various* kinds, that I am afraid to expatiate upon *any* one article. Cannot you make a shift to call upon me, before *my public life* arrives?—I would send my chaise to meet you at any place you should appoint.

* See Epilogue to Cleone.

I HAVE

I HAVE passed my winter hitherto pretty chearfully amongst my books, in what I *call* my library. It now better deserves that name, by the form I have given it, and the volumes I have added. Mr. S— would tell you something of my *other* occupations.

I COULD wish that you would favour me with a copy of your “Essay on Electricity,” and with any new copy of verses of your own, or of your friends.—Be not apprehensive: there shall nothing appear in print of your composition any more, without your explicit consent.—And yet I have thoughts of amusing myself with the publication of a small Miscellany from neighbour Baskerville’s press if I can save myself harmless as to expence—I purpose it no larger than a “Lansdown’s,” a “Philips’s,” or a “Pomfret’s Poems.”

HAVE you read my friend Dr. Grainger’s Tibullus? It affords you an elegant edition of a good translation and of the text. He is engaged in a war with S—, and has just sent me his pamphlet; which I could wish you to read, in order to form a judgment of S—’s character.—Spence, I see, has advertised his “Parallel betwixt Malliabecqui and his “Taylor.” It is merely a charitable design: and such are now all Spence’s views.

WHAT remains of my paper must be employed not in mere ceremony, although in something that bears

the form of it: in my best compliments to Mrs. Jago, and my offer, not indeed of a part of the friendship which I owe you, but rather of an equal quantity; in an assurance of the cordiality with which I shall rejoice to see both her and you; and in confirmation of that affection with which I have ever been, and am, my good friend, your most obedient servant,

W. SHENSTONE.

XCVI. To Mr. GRAVES, on their several Situations and Compositions.

Dear Mr. Graves,

The Leasowes,

April 18, 1759.

YOU will think my silence long; and I should be sorry to *have* you quite regardless of it; although, I fear, it must be my fate to trespass frequently upon your kind solicitude.—I have no excuse to make, beside some frivolous avocations, and *much* of that heaviness and lassitude which disinclines one to write letters.—I passed the former part of my winter with more vivacity than I did the latter, or even the incipient spring; owing, possibly, to these cold winds, which will not permit me to use my wonted exercise. You will laugh at the word *vivacity*, when applied to so dull an animal; but I speak comparatively of that unmeaning drowsiness which is my lot at other times, and *was*, in some sort, while you were here.

Mr.

Mr. Doddsley tells me, he received a letter from you, acquainting him that Cleone would be played at Bath: I should be glad to receive from you any particulars of its success. He is publishing an elegant edition of it, which I expect by this very post. The new plate of my grove, which will appear at the end of his Melpomene, is perhaps liable to some exceptions, but by much the best that has yet appeared: do not forget to send me your objections to it. As to the epilogue, I have totally banished, I think, every one of the lines which he *substituted*; have left to him the choice of two or three readings for the four last lines; and though none of them quite please me, yet the epilogue, on the whole, discovers more of genius, is more spirited, and less inaccurate. I shall be glad to find that you think the same with me.

In regard to your place, so far as I can form an idea of it, I would have you consult *self-amusement*; I mean, without too much regard to what *others* say or think. As to distinguishing your ingenuity (which I unfeignedly desire you may), the press affords you more *adequate* materials than either your fortune or perhaps your place. Do not imagine, however, that I shall not be much delighted with every stroke I trace of yours at Claverton. My faculties are very strongly intuitive in respect of every thing belong-

ing to you; and I should be ashamed if any nook or angel that you had rounded, any wall that you had ruined, any stream that you had diverted, or any single shrub that you had planted, should elude my discovery: yet you will shine *more* by means of the press; and if I said any thing concerning your — that did not *encourage* you to perfect it, I am sure I must use terms very inexpressive of my meaning. Without any more words, let me *intreat* you to proceed with it: give a *full scope* to your imagination; and if there should be aught one would wish *retrenched*, it is mighty *easily done*.

I HAVE indeed *thoughts* (for I *never* use the word *resolutions*) of publishing my Elegies next winter — you will gainsay, when I tell you my intention of publishing also my very Farm; at least, about eight or ten scenes taken from it, by way of top and tail-pieces for those Elegies. — The world will perhaps tax my vanity; but I do not in the least care. — The pleasure which that world gives me, I am very conscious, will not be too *high*; and I am determined that the pain it may seek to give shall bear proportion: yet should I be sorry to obtrude *stuff* upon it, either from the pencil or the pen; and my good friend Mr. Doddsley has sometimes pained me not a little.

I TELL

I TELL you, you *cannot* allow for winter. That very scene near Priory-gate shews not a bit of road in *summer*; though the consciousness of a firm rail there would add to my own tranquillity.—Mr. Knight has given me Strange's prints, which I hear are fine. Doddsley gives me swans: but for these two months past I have been a librarian, or rather a bookbinder; yet nothing more *unfeignedly*, than your, and Mrs. Graves's, most affectionate humble servant,

W. SHENSTONE.

XCVII. To the same, on Fables, Mottoes, Urns, Inscriptions, &c.

The Leasowes,

Dear Mr. Graves,

Oct. 3, 1759.

DEPEND upon it, I shall see Claverton before winter.—The mischief is, that, with as violent a propensity as ever person felt, I shall not be able to reach your hemisphere while Mr. Spence, Mr. Doddsley, and Mr. Whitehead, give it such peculiar lustre in my eyes. This I did not despair of doing at the time Mr. Doddsley left me at Birmingham. It turned upon an event which I did not indeed explain to him, the accommodation of the affair with D—; which concerns near one half of my little fortune, and which, if I have any luck on my side,

U 3

must

must now be perfected within a fortnight. I was shewn the rough sketch of our *conveyances* last Saturday.—Once for all, my *indolence* is not in fault; my health and my worldly embarrassments *have* often been so, and at present *are*. “*Pol me miserum, patrone, vocares, si verum, &c.*”

DODSLEY, to give his book eclat, should allow himself time to *abridge* and *polish*. It is not enough, in my opinion, merely to surpass L'Estrange and Croxall. The grand *exception* to Fables consists in giving *speech* to animals, &c. a greater *violation of truth* than appears in any other kind of writing! This objection is insurmountable. Their peculiar *advantage* is to remove the offensiveness of advice; in order to which, one should perhaps pursue a medium betwixt the superfluous garniture of La Fontaine, &c. and the naked simplicity and laconicism of Phædrus. In respect of his own new-invented Fables, I wish him to devise uncommon subjects, and to inculcate refined morals. But pray send me *your* two directly, which will answer all that I expect in Fables.

DID Mr. Dodsley tell you of the seat in my shrubbery which I had taken the freedom to inscribe to you? I could not *satisfy* myself in an inscription; and, from a kind of spleen and aversion to delay, made use of the shortest that I could devise. The seat and scroll are elegant. The inscription, only,

“AMICITIÆ

" AMICITIAE ET MERITIS

" RICHARDJ GRAVES.

"—IPSAE TE, TITYRE, PINVS, IPSI TE FONTES, &c.

" VOCABVNT."

I WILL not be so affected as to pretend that the much greater compliment you design *me* is more offensive to my modesty than it is pleasing to my friendship. I wish however it could be a little shortened. The "*inter hortensis elegantiae studiosos*" seems a little too verbose for inscription. Beside, I had *rather* the compliment were not thrown with so much *emphasis* upon any skill I have in gardening; but in some sort *divided* betwixt *that* and *poetry*, if you perceive no great objection; suppose,

" AMICITIAE G. S.

" QVI,

" NAIADAS PARITER AC MVSAS

" EXCOLENDO,

" SIMVL ET VILLAM EIVS ELEGANTISSIMAM

" NOMENQVE SVVM

" ILLUSTRAVIT."

OR,

" ET NOMINI SVO

" NON EXIGVVM DECVS

" ADDIDIT."

OR,

" AMICITIAE G. S.

" QVI,

U 4

" NAIDAS

"NAIDAS PARITER AC MVSAS

"FELICITER EXCOLENDO,

"SIMVL ET PATERNA RVRA

"NOMENQVE EIVS

"ILLVSTRAVIT."

or,

"AMICITIAE G. S.

"QVI

"BENIGNAS PARITER EXPERTVS EST

"NAIADAS ET MVSAS."

or,

"CVIVS VOTIS

"FAVERVNT PARITER NAIADESQUE, &c."

A motto,

"(FORTVNATVS ET ILLE, DEOS QVI NOVIT

"AGRESTES)

"PANAQVE, SILVANVMQVE, SENEM, NYMPHASQVE

"SORORES." VIRG.

"Illustravit" seems an happy word here, if it do not savour too much of *nobility*: villa, I presume, implies no more than a country mansion-house.—But I leave the whole to your discretion.

Now you speak of *our* Arcadias, pray, did you ever see a print or drawing of Pouffin's Arcadia? The *idea* of it is so very pleasing to me, that I had no peace till I had used the inscription on one side of Miss Dolman's urn, "Et in Arcadia Ego." Mr.

Anson

Anfon has the two shepherds with the monument and infcription in alto relievo at Shugborough. Mr. Doddsley will borrow me a drawing of it from Mr. Spence. See it described, vol. I. page 53. of the Abbé du Bos, "sur la poésie et la peinture."

TELL Mr. Doddsley, if he be yet at Bath, that Mr. Cambridge called and dined with me; answering precisely to the idea which I had conceived of him from Mr. D—'s account. I wish to God he may have brought you acquainted with Mr. Spence; to whom you are, in my estimation, the most *like* of any one I know. Is Mr. Spence yet at Bath? Mr. D— is gone, or going. Either he or the former told me that * anecdote of Pope and the Prince of Wales long ago. Pray read Madame De Sevigné's Letters—they have amused me much of late. I hope, within a post, to send you a neat plan of my farm, &c: the same to Mr. Spence by your means, if he be at Bath. Do you hear who is to be Bishop of Worcester? Give me the earliest intelligence you can gather. The late Bishop visited me last year; and intended, I hear, to have done so this. I wish we may have another as obliging and polite as I always found his late Lordship.

* On the Prince's asking Pope, how he could be glad to see him, when he expressed so much contempt of Kings; Pope answered, "Though he did not like old Lyons, he loved the young ones before their claws grew."

I WANT

I WANT to inclose some little engravings, &c. to you, but must wait till I can get a frank. Write *directly*, for this once, I beg you, though you prove dilatory another time. Of all books whatever, read Burke (second edit.) "Of the Sublime and Beautiful;" and of all points whatever, believe that I am, with my best good wishes to Mrs. Graves, dear Sir, ever your most affectionate and invariable friend,

W. SHENSTONE,

"DI MEMORIA NVDRISSI PIV QVE DI SPENE."
How do you like this motto for an urn?

My best compliments to Mr. Spence and Mr. Dodsley, if at Bath. I will write soon to each of them.—Your garden is as pretty as you can make it.

XCVIII. To the same.

Dear Mr. Graves,

The Leasowes,
Oct. 26, 1759.

I WANT no conviction of the pleasure which you will receive from the termination of my infernal lawsuit. It must, if I have *any* luck, be finally adjusted in about nine days time; after having robbed me of my peace for six of the best years of my life. During the *former* part of life, I languished for an acquaintance somewhat more extensive: and when the

the company that flocked to see my place removed all grounds of *that* complaint, this accursed dispute arose, and mixed with every enjoyment that was offered me.—I have sometimes found entertainment in balancing the good and evil that has been allotted me in general; and have in the end imagined the good prevalent, and that I have great reason to be thankful for more happiness than I deserve. Yet are there many awkward circumstances that forbid the *scale* to fall *precipitately*; among the chief, I place the distance to which I see you and one or two others removed. This is indeed an heavy article, and, were it not for letters, would be insupportable.

As to Mr. Doddsley's collection of Fables, you are mistaken if you think that I perused the quarto book. I dipped into it here and there, and thought there wanted *much* alteration. There was a little book with a paper-cover, on which I bestowed no small pains; and when I had so done, crossed the Fables which I thought might well enough pass muster. Addison would have been the best writer of Fables of any author I know—the purity of style—the conciseness—the dry humour—and the familiar manner. As to Doddsley's publishing this winter, he may possibly do so without loss of credit; but when one considers that they are, or ought to be, the standard for years to come, one can hardly avoid wishing him to give them the polish of another summer. 'Twas

fortunate that you pitched upon "The Raven and "Magpie" to transcribe for me; as Mr. Dodsley had sent me "The Sun-flower and the Tuberosa" before. I think the last somewhat inferior, but will reconsider it before I write again. The Fable which I literally translated from Phædrus was "The Wolf and the Crane," in order to give Dodsley an idea on *what* Rollin laid the stress in Fables:

As to the inscription, I will endeavour to adjust it to your mind—"Meritisque reconditionibus" may do, but is not explicit enough. I want fully to express a character that shines remarkably among select acquaintance, and yet (through extreme refinement) makes less figure in the public eye.

I HAD made the same objection to Burke's chapter upon *words*—and yet there seems to be something right in it. Du Bos (which I have only seen in *French*, but which I believe is also translated) consists of three volumes, 12mo. His subjects are pleasing, and his knowledge may be entertaining; but his genius seems not very profound, from the little that I have consulted in him.

DODSLEY is *precisely* what you say of him; an object of esteem and love, and in some degree of admiration. His *ear* does not wholly please me in writing, and yet he is intimately affected with musick

—Lord L—'s ear is perhaps the reverse. I mean, he does not much regard music, yet writes harmoniously in verse and prose.

ROBERTSON I think to buy—Butler also, though I shall not admire him—Lord Clarendon, when I am rich—Rasselas has a few refined sentiments thinly scattered, but is upon the whole below Mr. J—. Did I tell you I had a letter from Johnson, inclosing Vernon's Parish-clerk? Pray take Doddsley's advice in regard to your —; and heighten the ridiculousness of your *heroe*, which *his* kind of *lunacy* will countenance, yet admit him to say good things: but do not make *any* alteration in the narrative of your own story—at least, till I have again perused it.—Do not spurn this fifty pounds. It will procure you numerous conveniences, which you would perhaps otherwise deny yourself.

I HAVE passed four or five days, betwixt this week and last, at my Lord Ward's at Hinley. This has furnished me with franks, beside the consolation I derive from *having paid* a visit of *this kind*. It is "*spinis è pluribus una saltem exempta*." The *restraint* renders them *spinæ*. I hope I may say so without umbrage, or giving an appearance of disrespect; for Mr. W— is an agreeable man, and my reception was very polite.

I HAVE

I HAVE three or four more of these superb visits to make, and which I may not omit without giving real offence. To Lord Plymouth, next week; Lord Stamford's, the week after; then to Lord Lyttelton, at our Admiral's; and then to Lord Foley, if your friend Dr. Charleton will accompany me; then, &c. alas! alas! "*Quid me exempta juvat spina?*"—I must conclude upon a separate paper. That your *expectation* may not *deceive* you in regard to the plan I promised, I inclose a survey of my farm, reduced to miniature by a neighbouring artist. Let me know if it bring the place to your memory. I think to have a plate (which may be done at Birmingham for six or eight shillings), that shall leave me no trouble but to tinge the impressions with colours, in order to give my friends. But do you advise me to engrave *this*, or another that is twice as large?

I HAVE purchased "*Gerard upon Taste*," the author of which is a Professor at Edinburgh, and the book commended in the Review—you will say that the Reviewers are partial to Scotch-people—I know nothing of that, but the book is learned, and on a pleasing subject—I may perhaps add a very *important* one—for surely it is altogether unquestionable that *taste naturally* leads to virtue. I am however in some doubt whether it will give you that amusement which Burke's has done.—I *must* now take my leave, having
ing

ing engagements of a different kind ; but not till I have desired my hearty respects to Mrs. Graves, and her acceptance of this " Grove and King-fisher." I am, dear Mr. Graves, ever and most entirely, your very affectionate,

W. SHENSTONE.

XCIX. To the same, on his Want of Leisure.

Dear Mr. Graves,

The Leasowes,
Nov. 24, 1759.

THOUGH I write to you again so soon, yet it really grieves me to hear the complaint which you so often make for want of time. I, who have time to *waste* by lustres, cannot have patience with the world, that suffers *you* to want the leisure which you would employ to so much better purposes. Perhaps, however, you are as *happy* as more leisure could *make* you ; the case is not so *clear* as to leave me satisfied of the contrary. And yet, as the pleasures of imagination have an undoubted claim to a real existence, they must surely afford very *lively* sensations to persons of your sensibility and refinement. —Be this as it may, I *will* always *murmur* that you can so ill spare time for literary amusement. Nevertheless, make *one* effort, and finish the task you have now before you. I must confess, you may naturally reply, that I am now become an interested person ;

but

but *this*, I am sure, will be no check to your activity.

Mr. William Duncombe sent (with the first volume of Horace) one of the satires in *Ms. inscribed to me*. Upon purchasing, however, the second volume, I find *my* name is changed to "Hawkesworth."—Who knows but I lost this compliment by writing to you, my friend, while I should have been writing to him?—if so, indeed, you ought to make it up to me; and I am sure I shall prize *your* compliment beyond that of which I have been deprived.

THE view of B—, which you mention, I have indeed seen a long time ago; but surely the *water-fall* is quite detestable. There is something on each side, as I remember, that puts one in mind of a porridge-pot boiling over beneath the pot-lid. The appearance of the house and the back-ground is better; this was adjusted by the painter, the other (as I think Smith told me) by an old house-steward of Lord T—'s.

I HAVE inclosed another copy of the lines to Venus, for your emendation.—Thank you for the stanza you introduced.—I meant, indeed, *before*, to allude to *natural* beauty more than *moral*; but did not fully enough express myself. There remains no transition

now

now but from *animal* beauty to *inanimate*; which is easier.

You will observe, that I take great liberties with the Fables you ask me to revise.—Dodsley must think me *very* fantastical or *werse*, while I was correcting those he wrote at The Leasowes.—I find my ear much more apt to take offence than most other people's; and, as *his* is far less delicate than mine, he must of course believe, in many places, that I altered merely for alteration's sake. I cannot be easy without some certain proportion betwixt one sentence and another; betwixt one member of a sentence and another; without a melody at the close of a paragraph almost as agreeable as your “magnificent *salon*.”

I HAVE not written to Dodsley any decent letter since he arrived at his house in London.—I must now apply myself to write half a score Fables, and, if he chuses it, a translation of La Motte's Discourse upon the subject.—Your reply in regard to the delay of my publication cannot be answered; that is certain.

WHITFIELD's Journal, I *fear*, is purged of its most ridiculous passages.—Dodsley brought one down hither for Mr. Deane to shew my Lord D—th; but

he tells me, there remains nothing of that *gross* absurdity which I saw in your brother's at Mickleton.

THE painter whom I just mentioned to have taken some portraits through my recommendation, and to have painted a ruin for my green-room, offers to give me my picture if I chuse to fit.—Were you here to lend me your assistance, I should certainly comply.—Mean while, tell me what you think of some of the attitudes that I inclose. What I myself prefer at present is, to *lessen* my *dimensions* (which of itself gives a kind of beauty), and to appear in a kind of night-gown agreeable to the attitude marked AA. The man evidently hits off likenesses, and is esteemed to *shine* among the painters of Birmingham. I shall be forced to have your picture copied by him, which, by means of dampness, flies off the canvas; so that, on the whole, I shall re-pay his compliment.—This last article puts me in mind that I owe you my picture, whenever you demand it; but I would chuse to defer it till the spring, for some certain reasons regarding oeconomy. Remember me *always* to good Mrs. —; and believe me yours, with all possible affection,

W. SHENSTONE.

C. To

C. To the same, with an Account of a Design for his own Picture.

Dear Mr. Graves,

The Leasowes,

Jan. 8, 1760.

WERE I to regulate my compliments by the arrival of *times* and seasons, I should congratulate you upon a *correspondence* which now enters upon its three and twentieth year.—Our *friendship* is of something older date; and is not this an *achievement* that deserves the honour of a *triumph* both for you and me too?—More, I am sure, than the regular destruction of fifteen or twenty thousand wretches in the field; considering how *uncommon* we find friendships of so long a duration, and how *cheap* we find such victories, not only on the Prussian, but on the Austrian side.

MR. Cambridge (Scriblerus), who called here this autumn, was considering this massacre rather in a philosophical than political view; and, indeed, it does not appear to me that plague, earthquake, or famine, are more pernicious to the human race, than what the world calls Heroes; but enough of this.

YOUR want of leisure gives me pain; surely, if I may guess by one or two of your last letters, you have enlarged the number of your scholars, and extended your domestic cares, beyond what your circumstances require.

X 2

You

You must not judge of my painter's abilities by the small sketch I inclose.—I desired him to give me a *slight* one; and have, perhaps, ruined even *that* by endeavouring to bring it nearer to what the picture now is, *myself*. It will give you a tolerable idea in most points, except the Pan, which has his face turned towards the front; and is not near so considerable.—I chose to have this *term* introduced, not only as he carries my favourite reeds, but as he is the principal *sylvan* deity.—The Water-nymph below has the word "Stour" on the mouth of her urn; which, in some sort, rises at The Leasowes. On the scroll is, "*Flumina amem sylvasque inglorius*," alluding to them *both*.—The Pan, you will perhaps observe, hurts the *simplicity* of the picture—not much, as we have managed him; and the intension here is, I think, a balance.

THE dog on the other side is my faithful Lucy, which you perhaps remember; and who *must* be *nearer* the *body* than she perhaps would if we had more room. However, I believe, I shall cause her head to cut off that little cluster of angles, where the balustrade joins the base of the arch. The balustrade is an improvement we made the other day: it is, I think, a great one; not only as it gives a symmetry or balance to the curtain of which you complained, but as it extends the *area* on which I stand,

stand, and shortens the *length* of this *half-arch*. The painter objected to a tree; I know not why; unless that we could introduce no *stem* without encroaching too much upon the landscape: but the reason he gave was, it would be an injury to the face. The console is an Apollo's head. The impost does not go further than the pilaster, which ends the corner; and here the drawing is erroneous. We are, I think, to have a carpet, though we know not well how to manage it.

AND now, I must tell you the dimensions. The figure itself is three feet, three inches and a half; the whole picture four feet, eleven inches, by three feet, two inches and three-quarters.—The colour of the gown, a sea-green; waistcoat and breeches, buff-colour; stockings white, or rather pearl-colour; curtain a terra-sienna, or very rich reddish brown.—I think the whole will have a good effect; but beseech you to send me your opinion *directly*. There are some things we can alter; but there are others we must not.

You shall have one of the size you desire in the spring; but will you not calculate for some one place in your room? The painter takes very strong likenesses; is young; rather daring than delicate in his manner, though he paints well in enamel; good-natured; slovenly; would improve much by application. Adieu!

CL. To the same, on Fable, and other Articles of
Taste and Literature.

Dear Mr. Graves,

The Leasowes,
Feb. 9, 1760.

I COULD not understand, by Mr. Doddsley's last letter to me, that he had any *sort* of intention to publish his Fables this winter. Presuming upon this delay, and having neither had the *leisure* nor the *frame* of mind fit to take his preface into consideration, I have hitherto deferred to do so; and can only say in *general*, that I could wish you had happened to be more copious in your observations. La Motte's Discourse on Fables is a most excellent performance; containing, as appears to me, all that need be said upon the subject, and this expressed with all imaginable elegance and perspicuity. I believe I shall advise our friend D— to make more ample use of this dissertation. There is a translation of La Motte into *prose*, which is altogether *below contempt*; and yet, for aught I know, the *only* one. The word *naïve* is very probably *that* for which he has substituted the word *lively*; though by no means of similar import. *Natural* approaches nearer it; but according to La Motte is not precise; and, as the words *naïf* and *naïveté* seem of late to become more in vogue, I will here give you an extract of what he says upon the subject: "Je ne souhaiterois plus rien à l'auteur
" de Fables, si ce n'est d'être fidele au sentiment, &

" de

“ de le peindre toujours avec la naïveté qui le ca-
 “ ractérise ; car j’ose encore distinguer le *naturel* & le
 “ *naïf*. Le *naturel* renferme une idée plus vague,
 “ & il est opposé en général au *recherché*, au *forcé* ;
 “ au lieu, que le *naïf* l’est particulièrement au *réfléchi*,
 “ & n’appartient qu’au *sentiment*.

“ Le *sublime*, selon cette idée, peut être *naïf*. La
 “ réponse du vieil Horace à la question qu’on lui
 “ fait sur la conduite de son fils ; que vouliez-vous
 “ qu’il fit contre trois ? *Qu’il mourut*. Cette réponse
 “ est *naïve* ; parce que c’est l’expression toute nue du
 “ *sentiment* de ce Romain ; qui préfère la mort de son
 “ fils à sa honte. Il ne répond pas précisément à ce
 “ qu’on lui demande : il dit seulement ce qu’il *sent*.
 “ Ce n’est que dans la vers suivant que la *réflexion*
 “ succède à la *naïveté* :

“ Ou qu’un beau désespoir alors le secourut.
 “ Il *raisonne* dans ce vers ; il n’a fait que *sentir* dans
 “ le premier.

“ Les occasions du *naïf* sont, peut-être, plus fré-
 “ quentes dans la Fable ; & l’éloge de La Fontaine
 “ est de n’en avoir gueres manquées ; dans la Fable
 “ du Pot au Lait, le discours qu’il prête à sa Lanterne
 “ est un chef-d’œuvre de *naïveté*, d’autant plus sin-
 “ gulier, que sous l’apparence du raisonnement le plus
 “ suivi, le *sentiment* se montre dans toute sa force ;
 “ ou pour mieux dire, dans toute son *yvresse*.”

AND now, let me know what English word you would employ to interpret *naïf*. *Sentimental* has some pretensions; but is not wholly to one's mind.

I BOUGHT the quarto edition of La Motte's Fables, to which this essay is prefixed; though the vaunted cuts which tempted me to this extravagance did not answer my expectation. The author, with much address, begs the Duke of Orleans to be at the expence of them; which, to the best of my remembrance, was *deux mille ecus*.

Mr. Hurd, you see, is one of Dr. Warburton's Chaplains. I bought his "Dialogues Moral and Political," almost as soon they were published. Sir Edward Lyttelton told me, the introductory one would be omitted in the next edition. The three following are very ingenious; but the two former are a little ambiguous in regard to his intended moral: the two last are wholly political, and I have not yet perused them, though esteemed the *best*.

HAVE you seen Dr. Smith's "Theory of Moral Sentiments," which is prodigiously commended, and which I have bought, but not read?—You will see an account of this in the Monthly Review.

I HAVE

I HAVE lately been reading one or two volumes of "The Rambler;" who, excepting against some few hardnesſes in his manner*, and the want of more examples to enliven, is one of the moſt *nervous*, moſt *perſpicuous*, moſt *conciſe*, and moſt harmonious profe-writers I know.—A learned dicſion improves by time.

I AM ſorry to find no mention of your — in all the letters which I have received of late. Do not think of *dropping* or even *delaying* the publication of it; only, if you pleaſe, before it goes to the preſs, let me peruſe it once deliberately.—What think you, if Dodſley approve it, of admitting cuts into your ſcheme?

AND now, from *cuts* I proceed to *pictures*. Alcock's portrait of me is in a manner finiſhed; and has been hung up for theſe nine days paſt, in its carved frame, oppoſite to the fire-place in my library. *They ſay* it is a likeneſs, allowing for the diminution of ſize. Indeed, if I can conclude any thing from the ſtrong reſemblance which he has produced of *others* here, I may form ſome *conjecture* that he has not failed in mine.—Be this as it will, the picture is, upon the whole, a tolerably pleaſing one; and this is

* He too often makes uſe of the *abſtract* for the *concrete*.

the

the *most* I must dare to say, considering my own person makes so large a part of it.

WHAT think you of a tawney or reddish brown for the robe or night-gown, with black for the waistcoat and breeches, reserving green for the curtain? though green is, with me at least, no very gay colour, nor has it that effect which you apprehended in the drapery. Terra-sienna is a delightful colour; so, I think, is Roman ochre burnt. Let me know then, what objections you have to the drapery just now proposed. Let me know also any design that you think most pleasing for a back-ground; or any story of two or three figures, that would be suitable for a relievo.

FROM *pictures* I proceed to *painters*. I believe, Alcock would go and settle at Bath, if Amos Green could be induced to join him. Amos Green is the name of the painter whom I recommended to you *before my fever*. He is esteemed inferior to no one in England for fruit. He also paints flowers, insects, and dead-game, *very* well. To this he would adjoin the business of water-painting. Alcock would paint portraits in oil; and to this he would add enamel-painting: both of them the best-natured young fellows in the world. Now suppose them also *ingenious*, and tell me whether they would have a chance to *thrive*.

You

You ought to have very considerable *amends*, if you are to be plagued with writing and with music-masters.—I believe I rate your time and trouble at a much higher price than you do yourself.

DR. Blackstone has raised himself to a very eminent figure indeed in the world of letters. I rejoice at it, without one particle of envy, both as he is your friend, and a person of merit. I believe no one besides yourself would have dreamt of your odd analogy betwixt him and me.—I know not *how* they came to insert that insipid Song of mine, in the Chronicle.—What sensation it caused in me, was that of disapprobation; as it looked like laying stress on what one knows to be of no importance.

THE chief points wherein my picture varies from your drawing is in the corner below the base of the pedestal; where an antique vase is introduced with a flower and two or three leaves of the scarlet Geranium. The gilt vase agrees well enough with the gold fringe on the edge of the curtain; but the whole is so *subdued*, as not to catch the eye too strongly. It was chiefly meant to obviate the disagreeableness of the *parallel* lines and angles occasioned by the step in that corner; but it crowds that side a little, if one look from top to bottom; and, though a pleasing object,

object, it is hard to say whether it do more good or harm.

It is time now to take my leave, with my hearty respects to Mrs. Graves, and with the usual assurance, that I remain your most affectionate and faithful friend,

W. SHENSTONE.

Do write soon.

CII. To the same, on his neglecting his Correspondence.

Dear Mr. Graves,

The Leasowes,
July 7, 1766.

I MUST confess that I do not altogether find your argument conclusive.—An hurry of business may be necessary, and somewhat inconsistent with frequent correspondence; but a state of *leisure*, which I wished you, does not imply a course of *dissipation*, which makes your present apology for not writing to me before. And so, betwixt business at one time and dissipation at another, I am to be defrauded of a correspondence that is quite essential to my well-being. Pardon me, if, on such occasion, you find me extremely clear-sighted in the foibles of my friends; and do not say with the man in Horace, “Cur in amicorum vitis, &c.” The matter is too important for me to connive at any sort of sophism.—However,

to

to make you easy on this head, I am convinced the letter was owing to you; for which I will draw my apology neither from *business* nor dissipation: and yet how justly might I palliate my long silence upon either footing! Since I wrote to you, I have been *busied* in bringing about a conclusion with D—. The letters, journies, &c. *previous* and *posterior* to the execution of articles, would afford me noble matter for excuse.—The constant attendance upon workmen (of which I have fourteen or fifteen this very day), making a piece of water below my Priory, would produce more on the score of *dissipation*—you remember the place. This, at present, is my chief employment, although Alcock is drawing on the side of my table.—I wonder you do not get some little urns turned, in any sort of wood, about fourteen or fifteen inches high, and painted on the side with figures, in the manner of some antique basso-relievo. He has done something of this sort for me. You may, if you so please, have the ground a dark *bronze*, and the figures a *light* one. I am of late grown fond of bronze (which you yourself may easily execute), and I think it always was your taste.—Dodley comes hither in about a fortnight, and prints *one* edition of his Fables by means of Baskerville's press and paper. *Mean time*, he is to give me his picture done by Reynolds; and to send me two bronzed plaster urns, of about twelve inches, with basso-relievo; and two figures (ditto) of Homer and Virgil (of about twenty-

one inches) for two niches in my library. The parcel is to be pieced out with Ogilby's Virgil, which I want for the sake of the landscapes.—And now to the particulars of your letter.

I CAN readily conceive how much greater pleasure you must receive from the *retinue* of your journey, than an Archbishop can from all his equipage; and I can truly assure you, I find a pleasure in every pleasure you enjoy.

YOUR room, indeed, will be a noble one; but be sure remember the "*Imploravit opes hominis, fructumque recepit,*" and guard against it—to speak my sentiments, I think you will. I think with you in regard to Tristram Shandy; so does the author of the Monthly Review, you will see. I bought Webb instantly; but have not read it. Lord Lyttelton is *allowedly* the author of those Dialogues; whose the very last, I do not know. There is a noble specimen of Scotch poetry translated from the Erse language—I have had two copies sent me from Scotland; and, had I two franks, would send you one. "*Chrysalis*, or *The Adventures of a Guinea*" (real characters intended), will amuse you. Something *ever* occurs that obstructs my travelling at all—and though I long *ardently* to visit you, the Lord knows when it will be; yet *be* it certainly will, when I accompany Mr. Knight to Mr. Bamfylde's: where I am pressing-ly invited

invited by that gentleman and his neighbours, Lady Egmont, Sir Charles Tynte, &c.—I have about an hundred things more to say; which I must defer till I have heard from you.—God bless you and yours.

W. SHENSTONE.

CIII. To the same, on DODSLEY'S Fables, and other Literary Articles.

The Leasowes,

Mar. 1, 1761.

Dear Mr. Graves,

ALTHOUGH this interval in our correspondence must be placed, I fear, to my account, you will hardly think it mends the matter to fill my present letter even with the best-grounded apologies—I will only mention a bad state of health, which has been my lot this winter, as a general excuse for two or three months silence; and then declare, as with truth I may, that the esteem and affection which you have so well deserved of me have never undergone the least diminution or abatement. It is with me a melancholy task, to write letters when I am not well; although it be the time, of all others, when it is most necessary for me to receive them.—Our friend Dodsley, I presume, has sent you a book of his Fables before this time. What merit I have there, is in the *Essay*; in the *original Fables*, although I can hardly claim a single Fable as my own; and in the *Index*, which I caused to be thrown into the form of *Morals*,

and

and which are almost wholly mine. I wish to God it may sell; for he has been at great expence about it. The two rivals which he has to dread are, the editions of Richardson and of Croxall.—The *Fables* in Croxall are tolerably written: his *reflections*, little to the purpose, either for boys or grown people.—Richardson's *Improvement of L'Estrange* would be a better collection, both for the *Fables* and the *moral Reflections*, had he not admitted, through an extravagant and mistaken love of drollery, that vulgarity of phrase which in many places is not *common English*.—This I think a true state of the case: say the best you can in behalf of Dodsley.—As to his cuts, though to him expensive, they will hardly, I fear, meet with much of your approbation—the scale is much too small—and the emblematic prints which are larger will scarce, I fear, be understood.—I procured a copy from Baskerville *before* the plates were *inserted*, and have caused my painter (Alcock) to supply the vacancies with some devices of my own—some account of which I send you, as it may amuse you for a minute. I want one or two to compleat my scheme, and should be glad if you would propose some in your next letter.—I return you my hearty thanks for the hints you gave for the Cambridge verses; but when I received them it was too late, and I myself too much indisposed, either to throw them into proper form, or even to answer that gentleman's letter, which I thought a very genteel one.—I know not what he did
on

on that occasion, having seen neither Cambridge nor Oxford verses—Mr. Doddsley gave me “The Environs of London.”—Between friends, I wish he may find five thousand readers, whom the management of that work pleases more than *me*.—I will try to get you some of the *cuts*, if you desire me to do so, though it will reflect a kind of tacit dislike of the *whole* performance.—His brother publishes this winter “The Works of Soame Jenyns,” in three pocket-volumes; and a Chinese novel from a Ms. translation, revised, &c. by a friend of mine. You have perhaps heard me speak of Mr. Percy—he *was* in treaty with Mr. James Doddsley, for the publication of our best old ballads in three volumes.—He has a large folio Ms. of ballads, which he shewed me, and which, with his own natural and acquired talents, would qualify him for the purpose as well as any man in England. I proposed the scheme for him *myself*, wishing to see an elegant *edition* and good collection of this kind.—I was also to have assisted him in selecting and rejecting; and in fixing upon the best readings: but my illness broke off our correspondence, the beginning of winter; and I know not what he has done since.—There is a New Peerage going to be published; with, I believe, the draughts of the Peers houses—Lightholer called here, and said he had taken Lord Lyttelton’s, and Lord Stamford’s, for that purpose; the latter of which he shewed me.—Thus I have told you what I hear of new

publications. As to what passes in the busy world, I know no more than the Chronicle informs me—unless when your letters happen to be *rounded* with little anecdotes from Bath.—Have you seen Baskerville's new Prayer-books? My Lord Darimouth has undertaken to present two to the King and Princess.—Do, for *charity's* sake, make me some amends for this long chasm in our correspondence, by a very early and long letter.—I am sick to hear from you! being, with ardent and sincere affection, your ever faithful friend and servant,

W. SHENSTONE.

CIV. To the same, with some Political Anecdotes.

Dear Mr. Graves,

The Leasowes,

May 2, 1761.

I WILL, upon your last assurance, take it *ever* for granted, that you do not omit writing upon any score of ceremony. This will render your silence, at least in some *degree*, less irksome to me; when I do not think it the effect of my own procrastination.—Mr. Doddsley had sold two thousand of his Fables long ago; but complained that he should *lose* thirty pounds by my neighbour Baskerville's impression; and that he should not be more than ten pounds gainer

* "Our little life is *rounded* with a sleep."

SHAKESPEARE.

upon

upon the *whole*. I told him it was enough, in books of *this sort*, if the first edition paved the way for their future establishment in schools. And surely so it is: for a book of this kind, once established, becomes an absolute estate for many years; and brings in at least as certain and as regular returns. I would *wish* him to give the polite world one more edition from Baskerville's press; admitting only a *new* sett of emblematical top and tail-pieces; and confining those empty cuts relating to each Fable to the cheap edition which he prints at London. A second edition of this latter sort will appear in a little time; and if you have any improvements to propose, he will very thankfully receive them. Mr. Spence offers him to write *the life* afresh; and Spence, Burke, Lowth, and Melmoth, advise him to discard *Italicks*. I confess he has used them to a very great *excess*; but yet I do not think they should be utterly discarded.

I did not intend that Mr. Davenport should ever hear of those verses; and how he came to do so, is past my comprehension. He seemed to me to have deserted Worfield, without any intention to return again. I therefore meant to inscribe them under my own Venus, in order to afford some novelty, at an *easy rate*, to those who are curious enough to repeat their visits here. Pray, if you see Mr. and Mrs. Davenport, present my best respects to them; and as to the verses, I will send you a copy for them, if

Y^r Obedt^l Servant, J. Baskerville

you *desire* or *advise* me *for* to do.—Mr. S— is agreeable, not void of learning, has some smartness, but little taste. Mrs. S— has *much* of the latter; and perhaps imagination, which makes a part of taste, may have had no small share in converting her to Popery.—Mr. Powys: I have almost forgot.—You are ingenious and very inventive in regard to the means of giving yourself mortification. I dare to say, your new building suggests no such idea as you conceive; and I think it sufficient in a parsonage-house, if one sees detached specimens of taste or elegance, without uniformity, or even without consistency.

I do not find but that you *figure* among the gentry near Bath. Dr. Charleton, who was here yesterday with Sir Francis and Mr. Knight, gave me an account that the B— of G— had been to pay his respects to you. I will not enter into particulars, but would wish you to cultivate his acquaintance. I shewed Sir Francis the dead colouring of the picture which I intend to send to you; but you must know that Alcock is the most volatile of all creatures that have not wings: by way of improving the picture I meant for Doddsley, he has made it infinitely less like; and yet it must go to London as *it is*, for God knows when he can be brought to alter it.

I *asked* the Doctor, how Mr. Blackstone came to obtain a seat in Parliament; and his answer was,

“The

“The King insisted on it, as he was a man of learning and ingenuity.”—The enmity betwixt Lord L—n and Mr. P—, I find, continues in its full force; infomuch that my Lord is to have no place while Mr. P— continues in the ministry.—My Lord B—’s promotion was, it seems, demanded by the D. of N— and Mr. P—, as they would not be exposed to bear the blame, while he was the chief mover behind the curtain. These little particles of intelligence have, I believe, Sir ——— for their author.—I was told by another politician, the same day, that we were not to expect a peace; that the French, who might give up the Colonies, would not resign the Fishery.

Mr. Knight, his mother and sister, go through Bath to Mr. Bamfylde’s in about three weeks, if nothing intervene. I am teased greatly to accompany them— by my own *inclination*, I can assure you, as well as their *importunity*. I do not say I will *not*, nor must I ever promise you *beforehand* that I *will*. I have good reasons to the contrary. They have some thoughts of bringing Dr. Charleton into the party.

BELIEVE me ever yours and Mrs. Graves’s.

W. SHENSTONE.

Y³ CV. To

CV. To the same, on the intended Publication of
his Works.

The Leasowes,

Sept. 14, 1761.

Dear Mr. Graves,

I **TOUGHT** to have thanked you many weeks ago, for a very long and *entertaining* letter; the *length* of which, as well as the *entertainment*, was increased by a postscript a few days after. — But as the Winter is with me a dull and uniform season, so the Summer is a time of universal dissipation; and very happy do I think myself, when, after a continual succession of company, visits paid, and excursions taken, I can sit down in peace and quietness, to attend to the business of correspondence and friendship. Either reason, habit, or complexion tells me, that I am never *otherwise* so properly employed.

THE last digression I made was to the concert at Worcester, to hear “The Messiah” well performed; to meet a number of faces one knows; but first, and principally, to visit your brother, *without* which motive I had not gone. In the two *former* respects, the journey answered my expectation: — but, alas! your brother was gone into Herefordshire. I, however, alighted out of the chaise; and the house-keeper very civilly shewed me his delightful parlour, that looks into the meadows, the Prebends’ gardens, and down the Severn to Malvern-hills. A more agreeable town-

town-house cannot possibly be found any where. But I regretted, when I reached the inn, that I had not asked to see his children; for I either heard them upstairs, had a glimpse of them at the window, or fancied, to a degree of conviction, that they were most of them within the house. I now return to remark upon some particulars in your letter—I believe it is that indifference you complain of, which is the *grand* detriment to genius in an advanced part of life. In all *poetical* affairs, we are too apt to cry out with Pallas, “Non est mihi tibia tanti;” and this renders all our efforts tame, prosaic, and judicious. But this propensity, as well as many others, we should guard against, upon the approach of age; change the object of our amusements; cherish hopes, well or ill-grounded, of finding that pleasure in the novelty of objects, which we have not found in any individual. These are the means of *preserving our vivacity* a somewhat longer time than it naturally lasts; but how far it is *prudent* to attach ourselves to the world that we must leave, is a point which *you* better can determine. Refined taste, as it implies a *love* of physical beauty, has this tendency.

THERE is nothing can be more rational than what you say about the expediency of *losing no time*, if I mean to collect and publish what I have written. You are indeed very partial to my abilities; but, allowing for *that*, what you mention *coincides* with

what I have thought myself, and this for some years past. A more agreeable kind of *distracted* in summer, and an indifferent state of health and spirits in winter, have hitherto prevented any progress in the correction of my pieces. To these I might add a *supple* about the compositions, and the manner proper for publication. I am now most inclined to make a collection of the whole; I mean, the best of what are already printed or in Ms.; to publish them by subscription in a large *quarto* size for the sake of profit; and to apologize for this method, by mentioning the expence of top and tail-pieces, with which I mean they shall be embellished. Some of *these* (by the bye) may be taken from my farm, the rest emblematical, in an easy and careless, but, at the same time, elegant manner. I should think the instance of Mr. Pope might render this method not disreputable; and it might be advertised (as was done by Mr. Spence), that, unless a certain number were subscribed for, the whole affair should be no farther prosecuted. This would put it in the way of many friends to serve me, who (I flatter myself), *with inclination*, esteem themselves void of *opportunity*. Let me beg you to think seriously of this, as well as of a general title-page, before you write again.

THANK you kindly for all the little diverting anecdotes that are contained in your letter. I am glad to hear your *place* brings you company; partly,

as

as it tends to amuse you; and yet more, as it tends to make your merit more conspicuous. You and I have led a life of total disinterestedness. Let me advise you to seek some *advantage* from your commerce with *great men*.—The boy, who was here with you and Mrs. Graves, was here last Friday evening with a Mr. Jolliffe and his son; the latter of whom observed your name upon the bench, and seemed proud to declare that he was once your school-fellow. Mr. Stratford (to whom I had written about gold-fishes) says in his answer, “I had the pleasure from Bath of waiting upon Mr. G—, and was as much satisfied with the miniature beauties of his place, as with the polite reception I met with from the owner.” If you have an opportunity, you will oblige me by presenting my compliments to that gentleman.—I met Dr. Charleton at Worcester, who stands high in my esteem.—The account of Gothic architecture, &c. is curious; but I have found it in Dr. Warburton’s edition of Pope.—I inclose the verses on the Venus de Medicis—I told you before my intentions, &c. concerning them; and since, I hear that they have appeared in some one of the Magazines—through Dodsley’s or Percy’s means, for I surely gave a copy to nobody besides; and those copies must be much imperfect.—My picture shall be sent you as soon as I can possibly get Alcock over, who has promised to come every week for these three months past. I believe he *will* come soon.—I did

not

not know of Mr. Warton's compliment; but he is very obliging to me on all occasions, and sends me all that he publishes.—I have not yet read Dr. Robinson's History, to my shame be it spoken, though I have the honour to know the author.—I hope the King will oblige the Irish Peers with a place in the procession, as that people seems greatly out of temper; and, I fear, not without some reason.

I SEE my friend Doddsley has *let off* his little *squib* upon the marriage, in the Chronicle. "*The King sought a partner,*" &c. And last night was brought me, from Baskerville's press, on the same occasion, very *pompously* printed, the most despicable Grub-street I ever saw.

I HAVE made some little improvements about my place; have taken away the wall in front, and made a handsome ring; have extended my path, in one piece of ground, greatly for the better—but the grand water in the valley will make no figure till next spring.

I HAVE also assisted my friend Hull the comedian in altering the Tragedy of "*Rosamond*;" had it brought upon the stage to a full house at Birmingham, where it was very well received; put Hull into a way of making an indirect compliment to the present King in the ten last lines of his Epilogue, which

was

was followed by "God save great George," &c. in a full chorus of the audience and actors drawn out abreast upon the stage.

SINCE this, there has been deposited in my hands a large collection of Poetry, by a Miss Wheatly of Walfall: many of the pieces written in an excellent and truly classical style; simple, sentimental, harmonious, and more correct than I almost ever saw written by a lady. They will be published, I believe, by subscription, under the patronage of Lord Dartmouth.

BUT nothing in the poetical way has pleased me better than a compliment which I received about nine days ago by the post, under the feigned name *Cotswouldia*.—She must be some Gloucestershire lady that has seen the place; as she raises up a Fairy in my grove, into whose mouth she puts the compliment. It seems written by somebody of fashion by the style.—Can you form any conjecture?

THERE was a Mr. Freeman of Betstow (or some such name) with two or three ladies in a coach and six that were here not long before; a very genteel and polite young man.

I REALLY know not how to stop, when I begin a letter to you; and it is one reason why I look upon the
the

the task as too considerable to be undertaken at all times. Pray write soon, and believe me wholly yours and Mrs. Graves's.

W. SHENSTONE.

CVL To the same, suggesting to him a Subject for Poetry.

Dear Mr. Graves,

The Leasowes,

May 20, 1762.

I FIND you will *not* write, unless I give a regular answer to your letters; and yet, God knows, I have a better excuse for my delay, than I wish my friend to have for his punctilio; I mean, indisposition.—Whence it has happened, I cannot say, unless I may blame these continual east winds; but I have suffered more from the smiles of Spring, than I have really done from the frowns of Winter.

HAVING premised thus much, I lay your letter before me. The expence of printing a sheet of those commendatory verses at a common press is eighteen shillings; and at Baskerville's about three pounds, ten shillings: nor do I mean any decorations, unless perhaps "The King-fisher," or "View of my Grove," which, you know, I have engraven ready to my hands. So you see that *this* offering to vanity is not likely to be the most expensive.

I WISH

I wish you had bestowed somewhat more attention upon the title; in which case, I really believe the job had been executed long ago. Pray be so kind as to re-consider it.—Is not “The Garland of Friendship” a little too quaint? for that, as I remember, was what I proposed.—The motto which you proposed was a very good one; and I think also, that the addition of the next line would be an improvement to it; “Et isti errori nomen virtus posuisset honestum.” But I do not love double mottoes; so, if I admit this, I must exclude what I proposed; which, to speak the truth, was of my own invention.

THE custom of prefixing commendatory verses to collections of poetry is now seemingly grown obsolete. Besides, in my case, they would only shew that I had taken up more fame than my funds would answer. I return you many thanks for your poetical benevolence; but why do you mention it under the name of *Epigram*? I do not even chuse that it should have the air of *simile* from the beginning:

“Lo the tall youth, by partial fate’s decree,
“To affluence born, and from restraint set free;
“How pleas’d he, &c.”

I HAVE taken *this* and some other liberties with it, and shall insert it among the rest; unless you chuse to redeem it, with something more to your satisfaction:

for

for, to speak with frankness, I think it better calculated to do *me* honour than *yourself*; though I could esteem it *good*, if it came from a person whose abilities I respected less than yours. There is a subject here, which I would recommend to you, if by so doing I should lay you under no *restraint*. It is my principal cascade. Its appearance well resembles the playfulness of infancy; skipping from side to side, with a thousand antic motions, that answer no other purpose than the mere amusement of the proprietor. — Other similitudes, &c. would here occur;

“*Cui enim, nascenti faciles arriuerunt Musæ, &c.*”

It then proceeds a few hundred yards, where it *rolls* and *flits iron* for manufactures of all kinds; resembling the graver toils of manhood, either in acquiring money, or furnishing the conveniences, comforts, or ornaments of life; and in this manner it proceeds, under the name of The Stour, supplying works for casting, forging and shaping iron, for every civil or military purpose. Perhaps you may not know that my rills are the principal sources of this river; or that this river supplies *more* iron-works than almost any single river in the kingdom: for so my friend Mr. Knight told me.

THE Mr. D— you enquire after, and who wrote the *best* address Sir Robert Walpole ever *received*, is Mr. Dodington.—Did I never send you a list of all the

the concealed names in that Miscellany?—I began to transcribe one from my own set; but find one part of my list is lost; I however send it, and will piece it out when I find an opportunity; as I purpose also to give you some account of our several merits in Doddsley's Fables. By the way, do not the verses to Dr. Cornwallis (now Bishop) affect you sensibly, vol. VI. p. 138?—they do *me*, whenever I read them; and I cannot help applying them to myself. I feel somewhat of the same sensation when I read "The Letters of Henry and Frances;" in which (from self-partiality, no doubt) I find myself extremely like Henry.

PRAY let me hear, if you please, of Mr. Davenport.—I wish I had learnt to *draw* well in early life; it would have given me some very great advantages.—Let me hear also much of Mr. Melmoth, who I presume, has left you long before this time. I did once design to have sent you down my proposals for a subscription, and requested the favour of *you* to settle them finally, without any further reference to myself; but my head and spirits have been too bad to undertake even a common letter.—What think you of Dr. Lowth's Grammar?—Livie met him, at Mr. Doddsley's; and says, he is well pleased with *our* frontispiece, &c. to Horace. Livie could not present his book to Lord Bute, *himself*, on account of my Lord's indisposition. Mr. Dalton (Dr. Dalton's brother),

ther), who teaches the King to draw, presented it. It seems, this Dr. Dalton (who gave the drawing of Lord Bute's arms) has lodgings in the palace, and sees the King every day. While Livie was with him, word came that the King was coming into his room; upon which, Livie was sent out another way.—The King asked Dalton, whom he had with him?—and was answered, an editor of Horace, who had inscribed it to Lord Bute.—Dalton is to present a copy to the King.

I inclose to you a specimen of the decorated parts of Horace, with the frontispiece.—The book will be published in a month's time, when I mean you a copy from those that are allotted to me.

Mr Lord Bute's arms are unexceptionably well-finished.—The other plates, either through negligence, or the wilfulness of the designer and engraver, have given me infinite trouble and vexation. However, with about *two-thirds* of my directions observed, they will, I hope, afford you some pleasure; and discover somewhat more *beauty* and *spirit* than one commonly finds in such designs.—Send me your remarks very particularly, I beseech you.

W. S.

CVII. To

CVII. To the same.

Dear Mr. Graves,

The Leasowes,
Nov. 20, 1762.

DO I really owe you an apology? you who are embarrassed with such a number of momentous concerns, as hardly allow a fair trial to letters of mere amusement? Alas! I cannot shelter my long silence under a supposition of this kind. I believe, I even *hope*, that you have disapproved my long neglect; as I can very faithfully assure you I have repeatedly done *myself*. There are certain times and seasons when I have not either the *power* or the *will* to write: as Hannibal said about attacking Rome, “quandoque mentem non dari, quandoque potestatem.” This being an intellectual kind of *lethargy*, it would have been at least a friendly office, if you had *rouzed* me, as you *might* have done, by a supernumerary letter. I never receive a line from you, but I feel an almost irresistible propensity to answer it that very instant. Impediments sometimes occur; and, that instant being neglected, matter is accumulated for a longer letter than I am always resolute enough to undertake: at the same time, I can never content myself with uttering one half of what I have to say.—Pray is not that *good sort of man*, to whom you allude, a Mr. K—? Let him be ever so good a sort of man in the common estimation, I dare aver him to be neither an ingenious person nor a candid

critic. There may be fifty or more preferable readings to what are received in this new Horace; yet he will find a better *text* there, *upon the whole*, than in any one edition before extant. As to the *beauty* of *type* and *press-work*, it is too obvious to need vindication. The accuracy of the *latter* almost exceeds what was ever found in any other book. Then as to the *frontispiece*, it is, I think, much superior to such as *ordinarily* occur; the *subject* animated, and well-chosen; and the *execution* very commendable: at least, if we allow for the *nice* touches which it required, and the *uncommon difficulty* of getting any thing of this kind done to one's direction.

MR. Walpole is a lively and ingenious writer; not always accurate in his determinations, and much less so in his language; too often led away by a desire of routing prejudices and destroying giants: and yet there is no province wherein he appears to more advantage, in *general*, than in throwing new light upon Characters in British History. I wish he would compose a regular work, making this his principal point. He has, with great labour, in his Book of Painters, recorded matters of little importance, relative to people that were of less. I have a right to be severe, for his volumes cost me above thirty shillings; yet, where he drops the *antiquarian* in them, his remarks are striking, and worth perusal.—I have sent for “Gefner's Rural Poems,” and intend to see

“The

"The Death of Abel;" though I expect to find small pleasure in this *poetical prose*, unless exquisitely well-tuned.—Thank you for the anecdote of Lord Courteney: a thousand such sort of things, that engage the public attention, are never capable of penetrating the depth of my retirement:

MR. Melmoth you will probably see often, as he intends to make Bath his place of residence. The *Omphale* you sent me is a most excellent figure, and I shall with much to get a good cast of it; at least, when I am able to afford it.—When I write again, I will give you the best account I can of *my share* in Doddsley's new Fables; though it will be no easy matter to speak *separately* of it with any precision.

AND now, I think, I have spoke to most of the articles in your last letter.—Mr. Doddsley, who says he visited you, would acquaint you how we divided our time whilst he was here, into two *principal* parts, "l'un à dormir, l'autre à ne rien faire." Yet we paid our devoirs to a good deal of genteel company; of which this season has afforded me at *least* an equal share with any that went before. I will particularize a few; opening the list with no less personages than the Duke and Dutchess of Richmond—Mr. Walsli, Member for Worcester—Earl of Bath with Dr. Monson, Mrs. Mountague (who wrote the three last Dialogues printed with Lord Lyttelton's), and other com-

pany, from Hagley—Sir Richard Ashley—Mr. Mor-
daunt—Dr. Charlton with Mr. Knight—Earl and
Countess of Northampton—Mr. Amyand—Lord Ply-
mouth and Sir Harry Parker—Mr. and Mrs. Morrice
of Percefield—Lord Mansfield with Mr. Baron
Smythe, Lord Dartmouth and Mr. Talbot—Marquis
of Tavistock and Earl of Offory—your nephew Mr.
Graves, with Mr. Hopton and one of the senior
Proctors of Oxford—Lord and Lady Dacre—Baron
Plessen, Gentleman of the Bed-chamber to the King
of Denmark, with a Mr. Wendt his Tutor—Lord and
Lady Vernon of Sudbury with his children, Sir
Charles and Lady Tynte, and Mr. Garrick's brother—
Mr. Melmoth and Mrs. Melmoth—Colonel James—
Lady Ward and Lady Uill, with Miss Wrottesley, Miss
Pigott, &c.—Lord Lyttelton, Mr. Lyttelton, and Mr.
Rust—Lord and Lady Dartmouth with Lord and
Lady Willoughby de Broke—Mr. Anson of Shuck-
burgh with Mr. Stuart the painter and publisher of
“Athenian Ruins”—Mr. Pepys and Sir W. Wheeler's
son, Mr. Pitt's nephew, &c.—Colonel Bamfylde
with Mr. Knight's Family, &c. &c.—I did not ima-
gine my list would have engrossed so much of my
paper, and leave so little room to speak about the
individuals.—Lord M— appeared to me rather a *man*
of wit than a *man of taste*; Baron Smythe, the reverse.
—Mr. and Mrs. Morrice, extremely polite and agree-
able people, invited me pressing to their habita-
tion; I could not help reflecting on the singular hap-

pinels

piness of Mr. Morrice, to be possessed at once of a large fortune, one of the finest situations in England, and a wife whose taste for rural improvements appears even superior to his own; at least, if the *beauty* of her *person* did not impose upon my judgement. There are many others whom I would distinguish, if my time or paper would permit.—I suppose that you and Mr. Doddsley would be mighty unanimous with regard to the propriety of setting my subscription on foot. I do not dispute any of your arguments—they tally exactly with my own opinion: at least, allowing for the higher idea you have of my pieces than they deserve—the truth is, that I have deferred the publication too long *already*—till many of the compositions will not appear to the same advantage as before, and till I have not half the power that I had formerly to improve them. When I am low-spirited, I almost shudder at this tremendous contract with the publick; when my spirits are elevated, I see the necessity that you do, of not losing a moment's time—were you here a week, you would put the matter upon a footing that was unalterable—would to God you *were* here, or any one *like* you! however, it is probable you will *soon* hear from me again upon this very subject—I *know* this, that, *if* I print at *all*, the subscription is by no means to be neglected this present winter.—I have seen our friend Dr. Charleton many times this season; at The Leasowes; at Mr. Knight's; at his own house; and at my Lord Foley's.

This visit to my Lord Foley's was performed about three weeks ago. I went with young Knight; and the company of the Doctor and Sir Francis Charleton took off all restraint, and made the visit perfectly agreeable. My Lord's behaviour was entirely free and hospitable; and his conversation lively and entertaining—I must confess, far beyond the idea which I have been taught to conceive of him. His table the most magnificent, I believe, of any Nobleman's for thirty miles round. His park, and Woobery-hill adjacent, afford views that are either extensive, wild, beautiful; or grand. The portico before his lodge deserves particular notice. His house large, and commodious, and well furnished; but scarce any of the rooms *high* enough to stand the test of modern criticism. But what strikes more than all the rest, is the magnificence of his chapel—which however I cannot stay to describe; for I this very *moment* receive your letter.—After having written so much before, I can only touch upon some few particulars.—I believe, my scheme of publication will proceed in a little time, and that you will soon hear from me again.—If you can possibly excuse me to Mr. Davenport, and keep me well with him for a week or fortnight, I will not fail to write him a respectful letter.—I am truly ashamed of my neglect; but have written more letters within this week than I have done for a quarter of a year before.—That there is a faction forming against Lord B—, I readily believe. The war may
suit

fait the *mercantile* world; and the City of London has generally the art to represent the *landed* and *trading* interest as *precisely* the same thing: but I think there is a very material difference; which it would be no way difficult to demonstrate—at least I am one that cry out,

“Nulla salus bello; pacem te poscimus omnes!”

I am quite unacquainted with the affair relating to Colonel Wilkes and Lord Bute's son.—And now (though I mean to write again soon) I will release you from this unpleasing scrawl. I beg however that you would not fail to write to me *directly*, if you can find leisure; being quite impatient to converse with you, after such a chasm in our correspondence; and being, with unvariable affection, my dear friend, for ever yours.—Pray my best respects to Mrs. Graves.

W. SHENSTONE.

Mr friend Dr. Grainger has written a Poem, in blank verse, which he calls “The Sugar-Cane.”—It is divided into four books, and is capable of being *rendered* a good Poem. My friend Jago has written another Poem, in blank verse also, which he calls “Edge-hill.” It is descriptive chiefly of the prospect—but admits an account of *the fight* there, and many little *tales* and *episodes*; with compliments also to the gentry of Warwickshire.—It lies now upon my table.

CVIII. To Mr. Jago.

My dear friend,

1762.

A THOUSAND thanks to you for the very obliging and humorous Poem which you are so kind to send me. I really think it very ingenious, and, upon the whole, extremely correct; although I have taken the liberty of proposing one or two hints for farther improvement. The relation that it bears to me and my place *may* tend to prejudice my *judgement*; but I cannot conceive that it requires aught beside *impartiality*, to relish the beauties of this Poem. I beg I may receive a fair copy in your own hand, as soon as possible; and I will consider, in the mean time, how to shew it to the publick in the most advantageous manner. It certainly does me *honour*: as things are at present circumstanced, it may *tend* to do me *good*; which I am very sure you would be glad to see. I am a little ashamed to be so much behind-hand with you, in favours of *this* and *other* kinds: but I live in hopes there may come a day, when I shall find occasion to express my gratitude. The pictures you sent arrived safe on Thursday: and have been since cleaned, and put up in their places. I cannot enter upon this subject now; finding it almost six o'clock at night, and having just received a letter from Mr. Doddsley which he requires me to answer by return of post. It relates to the *scheme* mentioned in his last, which is intended for my emolument;

ment; but which I must not expect to succeed, without considerable mortification. This *inter nos*.—You must by no means lay aside the thoughts of perfecting *Edge-bill*, at your leisure. It is possible that, in order to keep clear of flattery, I have said less in its favour than I really *ought*—but I never considered it otherwise than as a Poem which it was very adviseable for you to compleat and *finish*. I am now to desire my best respects to Mrs. Jago, and to bid you an affectionate adieu:

“Tu comes antiquus! tu primis junctus ab annis!”

I AM, my dear friend! ever yours, with the truest esteem,

Dec. 18, 1762.

W. SHENSTONE.

CIX. To SHERRINGTON DAVENPORT, Esq;

The Leasowes,

Jan. 4, 1763.

Dear Sir,

MR. G—tells me, that you have done me the honour to lay some stress upon receiving a letter from me. Alas! it must be owing purely to your benevolence, which makes you wish to hear of an absent friend, and not to any expectations you can reasonably form of entertainment from his pen. The long letter with which you favoured me was so very lively as well as ingenious, that I despaired of drawing

ing from my fountains the vivacity you do from the Bath waters. But, be this as it will, the vein of friendship that runs through your letter demands my amplest acknowledgements; and if you will accept of *such* returns, I promise they will be as *heartily* as they are *insipid*.

I AGREE with you, that the first sallies of imagination will generally prove the most sprightly, and that they will often comprehend the principal features of a subject. They are of the nature of dead-colouring in a portrait; which one sometimes thinks more spirited than the same performance when finished. And yet a *good* painter will not *hurt* a portrait by the subsequent labour he bestows upon it, nor will a *good* writer injure his piece by the pains he takes to round and perfect it. It must be some defect in the taste of either that makes his diligence detrimental, or gives occasion for a stander-by to cry out, "Manum de tabula." I believe it will appear upon examination, that works which cost most labour have generally been thought the *easiest* and pleased the *longest*. One cannot, however, deny that there is a sort of persons formed by nature for *shooting-fly-ing* (which, by the way, I could never *do*), and that their sallies of imagination are what they can hardly improve by any future pains. These may be called men of wit and fire, but it is the union of *taste* with these that constitutes fine writing. True taste will
never

never stiffen or over-charge any performance: it will rather be employed to smoothe, simplify, and give that ease on which *grace* depends. One can as little deny that there are *kinds* of writing which have a better chance than others to succeed without much labour, which start forth mature at *first*, as Pallas did from the brain of Jupiter. Works of *humour* are often of this sort; and there are many instances in Butler's *Hudibras*. Yet I think the humour of *Swift* was greatly owing to a judicious *revival*.—Pardon me, my dear friend, for this tedious discussion, which you little thought of bringing upon yourself by the obliging hint you gave concerning those verses upon Venus. I do acknowledge that an additional stanza there, containing a reflexion on Chinese architecture, were better laid aside. It seemed to me one of the “*splendida peccata*,” that might be a little *popular* at this *time*; and has, therefore, for this season, appeared on a board by the side of the Venus. We, who cannot erect fresh temples, or even add a new garden seat every spring, are obliged to make the most we can of a new and tolerable copy of verses, that costs us *thought* instead of *money*; and even at a pinch to piece out a dull scene with duller poetry: how else could I keep my place in countenance, so near the pompous piles of Hagley? And yet there are few *fashionable* visitants that do not shew an *affection* for the little Amoret, as much as they admire the stately Sacharissa—“*plerumque gratæ divitibus*
“*vices.*”

"*vices.*" I have often considered why those possessed of palaces yet esteem a root-house or a cottage as a desirable object in their gardens.—Is it not from having experienced the imperfection of happiness in higher life, that they are led to *conceive* it more complete beneath a roof of straw; where, perhaps, it may really be as defective as in the apartments of a King or a Minister?—A thousand thanks to you and Mrs. Davenport for the accommodations you so kindly offer me. Experience will no more suffer me to question the *cordiality* than the politeness of your reception. What an amusing picture have you given of Bath! pleasures carried to the utmost height, and opiates ready when one is cloyed with pleasures! And yet let me confess a truth, you have *lightly* touched upon those *very* articles which would prove to me the most *specifically* pleasing. For can any temptation be stronger, than to say that *you* reside there? and does not my friend G—reside at Claverton, of whose genius and friendship I have had proofs these twenty years past? and have you not Mr. Webb, and now Mr. Melmoth, to make Bath *enviable* for the residence of literature? What a joy would it afford me to go on a party with you to Percefield, whither Mr. and Mrs. Morrice gave me the most pressing invitations!—These surely are pleasures of which—I *hope* one day to partake.

Mr

My health, generally bad in winter and spring, has hitherto been tolerable. The *influenza* of last spring continued to depress me half the summer. Would you think the verses I inclosed were written on that occasion by a young journeyman shoe-maker; and one that lives at the village of Rowley, near me? He considered my disorder in somewhat too *grave* a light, as I did not think my life endangered by it; but, allowing for this, and the *partiality* he shews *me*, you will think the lines pretty extraordinary for one of *his occupation*. They are not, however, the *only*, or, perhaps, the *chief* specimens of his genius; and yet, before he came to me, his principal knowledge was drawn from *Magazines*. For these two or three years past, I have lent him Classics, and other books in English. You see, to *him*, I am a great Mæcenas; although you and my friend expect me to become an author by subscription. On this head I will say no more at *present*, than that I am infinitely obliged by your extreme friendly offers. My friend G—, who knows my sentiments, has sometimes the honour of waiting upon you; I ought not, therefore, after this tedious epistle, to begin to trouble you with a written explanation of them. Believe me, dear Sir, with my most respectful compliments to Mrs. Davenport,

Your ever obliged

and most obedient servant,

W. SHENSTONE.

I WILL

I WILL send you some other of Woodhouse's verses, when I can get him to transcribe them.

CX. To Mr. JAGO.

Dear Mr. Jago,

The Leasowes,
Jan. 4, 1763.

MY last letter must have been confused, and the arrival of it, I fear, uncertain.

THE hare and birds, in one of the pictures which you sent me, I think, are well; the other parts of it indifferent; the greyhound worst of all. The portrait is by no means equal to its companion, either in beauty of the person, or skill of the painter; yet it matches so well with the other, that I find my parlour very much embellished by it. Pardon the freedom with which I criticise your present; and accept once more my very thankful acknowledgements.

I AM truly glad to find so worthy a Nobleman, and so warm a friend of yours, as my Lord Willoughby is, made a Lord of the Bed-chamber.

I HAVE heard nothing since I wrote last in regard to *my* affair; though I expect to do so every day. I have such a tribe of humours and peculiarities, that
it

it is easier to make me rich than to make me happy; and ten to one that the favour will not be conferred without disgusting some of these said humours, &c. However, one must make the best of it; and reflect, that mortifications in one place may preclude mortifications in another.

I go to-morrow, by appointment, to Enville; where I may probably stay till Saturday. I have wished most heartily for a copy of your Fable to take with me; but Doddsley has not yet returned that I sent him. Pray consider my proposed alterations rather as hints than real improvements, and let me have a copy as soon you can. I wrote my criticism over twice, and know not whether I sent the best or the worst copy; so I send the other, though perhaps much the same. I forgot to particularize many shining parts in your little Fable, that are either elegant or humorous: of the former sort, nothing could be happier than what you say about H—; as it touches, in the *gentlest* manner, on a possible truth, which, if expressed rather than implied, might not be altogether inoffensive. This beauty is produced by substituting H— instead of L—, the place instead of the proprietor.

I HAVE lately read "The Death of Abel." It is not void of merit; but might have been made much more pathetic by a more simple and prosaic style.

I DESIRE

I DESIRE my best respects to Mrs. Jago and your family.—May not I see you here this Christmas? as I wish to do, because it is the season present; and not that I am not at all times and at all seasons most unfeignedly glad to wait upon you, and most affectionately your ever faithful servant:

“*Tecum etenim longos memini consumere soles,*

“*Et tecum primas epulis decerpere noctes.*

“*Unum opus, & requiem pariter disponimus am-*

“*bo, &c.*”

Your kind remembrance of me in your Edge-hill has brought these quotations into my head. Adieu!

W. SHENSTONE.

CXI. To the same.

My good friend,

Jan. 11, 1763.

I AM suspicious that my letters (of which I have sent two) do not reach you by the way of Warwick. This is meant as an experiment whether they will arrive by way of Southam. It is meant withall to remind you of perfecting your little Fable, and dispatching it to me as soon as may be. I would fain transmit a copy to Lord S—'s, before the
the

the family separates, or leaves Enville ; by whom, I am sure, it would be admired.

I AM just returned from a visit which I made there, of four or five days passed very happily. At coming away, I shewed my Lord two or three of Mr. D—'s last letters, which laid open to him the scheme that was carrying on for me. I requested also, if there should be occasion (which there possibly might *not*) that he would allow me the honour of being known to him. He said, "he was glad to find what was going forward; and had long wished to see something of that sort begun before: that he should be in town, I think, in February; and would do me any service in his power. He desired me also to acquaint Mr. D— (in allusion to the latter's uncertainty about my Lord's political connexions) that he thought it the duty of every honest man to support the present Government; and that he should continue his regard for the Minister, so long as he saw nothing in his measures that was prejudicial to his Country."

I KNOW that you will take a friendly part in any good that may befall me. Pray write, be it ever so carelessly; and believe me ever yours and Mrs. Jago's most affectionate and faithful

W. S.

The writer survived the date of this letter but a short time, his death happening on the eleventh of the following

ing month, to the inexpressible grief of his more intimate friends, and the generous concern of those, who, too late acquainted with his merit, were indulging themselves in the pleasing thought of having provided for his future ease, and tranquil enjoyment of life."



...that was carrying ...
...that he would ...
...was going ...
...something of ...
...should be in ...
...would do me ...
...kind message ...
...to the latter's ...
...every honest ...
...mistake; and ...
...the Minister ...
...ones there was ...

I know that you will take a friendly part in any good that may befall me. Pray write, be it ever so casually; and believe me ever yours and Mrs. Jago's most affectionate and faithful

W. S.
CON-
...the date of the letter but ...
...his death ...
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